Entertainment / A22

Melanie: I am not afraid of you, Mark Lapid

■ World / A8

US Democrats see politics in US terror alert

■ Lifestyle / D2

Ex-journalist, ex-priest now cordon bleu caterer

■ Motoring / C1

Volvo cars disturb curves of Taal Volcano

■ INQTV INVESTIGATIVE

Lito, Bong, Jinggoy: Handa na ba sila?

Ngayon alas-8 ng gabi sa ABC

39 lawmakers form alliance vs new taxes

By Carlito Pablo

AN "ALERT" has been raised in Congress.

It's the Alliance of Legislators Against Regressive Taxes (Alert), a group of 39 members of the House of Representatives who want the government to first improve tax collection before imposing new ones.

39 LAWMAKERS/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Lacson-Angara conflict erupts in shouting match

By Christine Avendaño

ELECTION campaign wounds are among the hardest to heal.

Sen. Edgardo Angara and Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who managed to stay out of

LACSON-ANGARA/ A5

LABAN NG MAGKALABAN!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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Oil soars, hard times loom

DOJ ready to ask US to bring back Gracia

By Philip C. Tubeza and Fe Zamora

A SECOND coming for Gracia?

The Department of Justice raised this possibility yesterday, saying it was prepared to ask US authorities to bring back American missionary Gracia Burnham to the country if she would be needed in any congressional investigation into the alleged collusion between the military and Abu Sayyaf bandits.

But US authorities would have the final say, the DOJ said.

"The DOJ is ready. We may request for her return," acting Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez said.

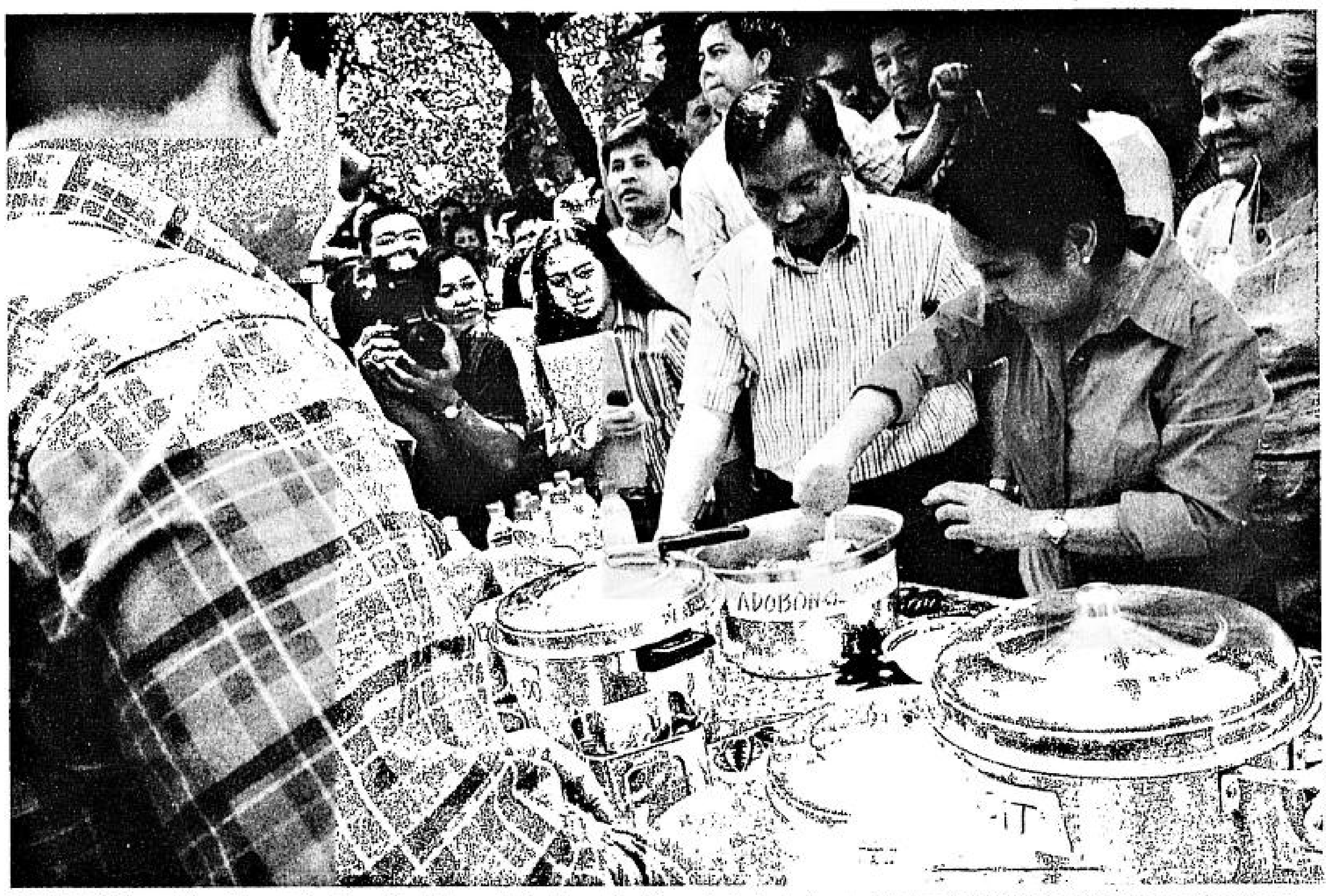
She said the DOJ could ask the United States, through the RP-US Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), to bring her back to the country.

"Through the MLAT, we may ask for assistance if we need (the testimony of) a person, but it will be up to their discretion if they're going to allow that," Gutierrez said.

Sen. Sergio Osmeña III on Tuesday said he was considering asking the Senate to reopen its investigation on the accusations that the military was in cahoots with the bandits.

Buddy Recio, one of the Filipino hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf along with Burnham and

DOJ READY/ A6



EDWIN BACASMAS

CORDON bleu cuisine it is not, but President Arroyo helps herself with gusto to taste the *carinderia*-style delights of the man on the street after she conducted the second Pulong ng Bayan (town hall meeting) with Caloocan residents at the Poblacion Public Market on Wednesday. Other diners are Vice President Noli de Castro (back to camera) and Caloocan City Mayor Enrico Echiverri (beside Ms Arroyo).

GMA averts House row with 1 phone call

By Carlito Pablo, A. Noel Velasco and Christine O. Avendaño

ALL IT took was a phone call from Malacañang.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has again intervened, this time to avert a possible showdown between administration parties Lakas-CMD and the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) over the chairmanship of a powerful committee in Congress.

With Ms Arroyo's intercession, the chairmanship of the House committee on ways and means will now be shared by Representatives Jesli Lapus (NPC, Tarlac) and Herminio Teves (Kampi, Negros Oriental).

In an earlier display of her clout, Ms Arroyo personally endorsed Lakas president Rep. Jose de Venecia Jr. (Pangasinan) for a fourth term as Speaker of the House, preempting any challenge to De Venecia's leadership by other power blocs in the House, including her own Kampi.

Lapus and Teves confirmed the term-sharing arrangement in separate interviews with the INQUIRER.

Under the agreement, Lapus will serve as chair for the first 18 months and Teves for the remaining 18 months of the 13th Congress.

Lapus said: "In the interest of avoiding further delay of the congressional reorganization and starting work on urgent revenue

GMA INTERVENES/ A5

World prices show no sign of letting up

OIL PRICES hit a record high of more than $44 a barrel in the United States on Wednesday on continuing concerns that any major disruption in global crude flows could further tighten supply.

US crude struck $44.28 a barrel, 13 cents up from Tuesday's settlement and the highest since oil futures were launched on the New York Mercantile Exchange in 1983.

London's Brent crude rose 18 cents to an all-time high of $40.82 a barrel.

With the continued surge in world oil prices, Filipino consumers will have to brace for harder times ahead as domestic prices of petroleum products, including cooking gas, inevitably go up, analysts said yesterday.

This will then have a 'domino effect' on transport fares, utility rates and on the prices of goods and services.

Already, a group of jeepney drivers has already threatened to stage a transport strike to press for another round of fare hike. Power producers and distributors may not be far behind in seeking a rate increase.

Oil's latest boost was triggered on Tuesday, when the head of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries said there was no spare oil immediately available to cool red-hot prices.

Opec president Purnomo Yus-

OIL SOARS/ A7

REUTERS

A DREAM come true: A walk in the park for Datun Gambila with his children, thanks to Handicap International.

War amputees get chance to stand on two feet again

COTABATO CITY—A decade after a rocket-propelled grenade shattered his right leg, sending him into years of seclusion and self-pity, Robelin Marfil is finally looking forward to standing on his own two feet.

If all goes according to plan, a plaster mould will soon be fitted to what remains of the limb, forming the basis for a new fiber-glass leg that will allow him to throw away the makeshift crutches he has hobbled around on for years.

As he waited for his fitting, the 37-year-old farmer from Central Mindanao chatted animatedly with another one-legged man. The simple joy of taking his children to a walk in his local town plaza was finally within reach.

"I am excited. I can't wait to throw away these things," Marfil said, nodding at the improvised crutches.

"After I lost my leg, I wanted to hide from my friends, my neighbors and from society. The emotional pain was really unbearable. I never

WAR AMPUTEES/ A5

Why world oil prices are so high

SINGAPORE—Some of the factors behind the surge in world oil prices include rising demand, lack of spare supply, political tensions in oil-producing nations, bottlenecks in refineries, and difficulties in developing new oil fields.

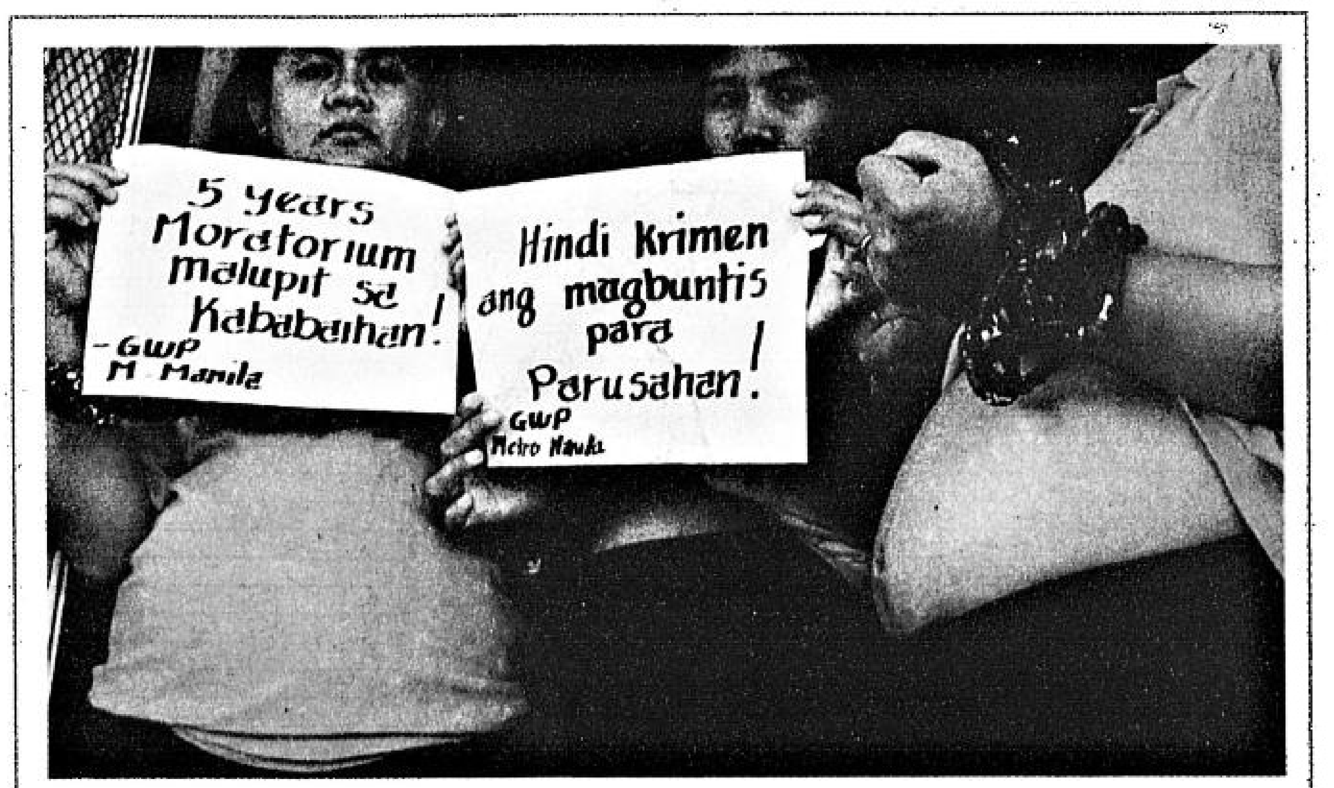
One of the major reasons oil prices have skyrocketed is China's economic expansion that has given a dramatic boost to world oil demand, sucking in crude and refined products from all around the world. Unless the Chinese economy overheats, traders expect its fuel demand to keep growing for the next two or three years, encouraging big-money speculative hedge funds to bet that high oil prices are here to stay.

Chinese oil demand is forecast to grow another 500,000 barrels per day (bpd), or 8 percent next year, following this year's projected 14.5-percent jump as car ownership surges and power generation needs grow.

India's consumption is growing fast too. And solid growth in the US economy—which devours a quarter of all world oil—is driving competition between Asia and the United States for supplies.

The rate of demand growth caught forecasters such as the International Energy Agency by surprise. Consumption forecasts have proved too low, encouraging Opec (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) producers to keep supplies tighter

WHY/ A6


5 years Moratorium malupit sa Kababaihan! -GWP M Manila
Hindi krimen ang magbuntis para Parusahan! GWP Metro Manila

BELLYACHING

JOAN BONDOC

Proud to be pregnant, women in Quezon City stage a "buntis walk" on Wednesday with their hands in chains to protest the 5-year moratorium on childbirth proposed by Rep. Ace Barbers.

Separation day for RP twins

By Cathy S. Babao Guballa
Contributor

TWO-YEAR-OLD conjoined twins Carl and Clarence Aguirre listened in rapt attention as their mother Arlene cooed, "You can do this. You have done it three times before. When you wake up, you will no longer be bound together."

Still, silence. Tears started streaming down Arlene's cheeks. Then the boys smiled ... and laughed.

"They probably thought I was being the drama queen again," Arlene told the INQUIRER in an exclusive phone interview.

Speaking in Filipino, she had just described the "conversation" with her children before they were put to sleep for yet another brain

SEPARATION/ A5

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southwestern Luzon, Western Visayas and Western Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with occasional rainshowers. The rest of the country will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/08/03/04

Second FrontPage

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Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Terror threat lingers, says AFP

By TJ Burgonio

THE TERROR threat in the country has not subsided, even with the arrest of two suspected members of the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror group for alleged involvement in the Dec. 30, 2000 bombings in Metro Manila.

Armed Forces Chief Gen. Narciso Abaya said the military is looking for three more members of a JI terror cell following the arrest of the two JI suspects accused of killing 22 people in the country's worst terror attack four years ago.

"There are some more suspects in the Rizal Day bombings, and they're still out there," Abaya told a press briefing after presenting the two suspects, Mamasao Naga and Abdul Pata, who were arrested by military intelligence agents in Marawi City last Monday.

Naga, alias Zainal Paks, and Pata, alias Mohamad Amir, are facing multiple murder, multiple frustrated murder and multiple attempted murder charges.

Abaya refused to identify the three men who are being sought by authorities.

Indicted

But earlier reports said that a certain Alim Pangalian Solaiman, alleged head of the special unit of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and two alleged MILF rebels—Salman Moro and Ustad Said—had been indicted along with Naga and Pata for the Rizal Day bombings. The three are at large.

President Macapagal-Arroyo parised the military for the arrest of the JI suspects, saying it was "a clear indication of the undiminished and unrelenting vigilance of our people in the global alliance versus terror."

The breakthrough could not have come at a better time. The United States, Australia and other members of the antiterror coalition cast doubts on the the Philippines' determination to fight terrorism when Ms Arroyo withdrew the small Filipino contingent from Iraq last month to save a Filipino worker hostaged by Iraqi militants.

"We will continue waging this fight to clean up our shores of terrorists and alongside our neighbors, to sweep the region of their clandestine cells," the President said in a statement.

"We will do our best to bring the battle against terror forward, and we will continue to be a strong link in the global chain of constricting terrorism," she said.

Washington concern

Washington has expressed deep concern over the reported presence of Jemaah Islamiyah training camps in the south and has deployed US counter-terrorism troops to train and arm Filipino soldiers battling Muslim militants and other insurgents.

MAMASAO NAGA

MOHAMAD AMIR

The military has arrested several Muslim militants with alleged links to the group and have acknowledged that up to 40 Jemaah Islamiyah foreign militants may still be hiding in Mindanao, home to a Muslim minority and site of a decades-long Muslim separatist insurgency.

Five almost-simultaneous bombings on Dec. 30, 2000—nationally observed as Rizal Day—struck a train and four other targets, including a bus, in Metro Manila, killing 22 people and injuring more than 100 others in the country's worst terrorist attack, blamed on the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah.

Abaya said Naga was responsible for the train bombing, which accounted for nearly all the casualties, while Pata planted a bomb on the bus, where at least one person was killed.

The two handcuffed suspects were brought briefly into a hall at the military's national headquarters to face the cameras. They wore orange detainees' shirts and were not allowed to talk.

Admission

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Army Chief Lt. Gen. Efren Abu said both men admitted during interrogation that they were Jemaah Islamiyah members.

The military said they worked with a suspected JI bomb expert from Indonesia, Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, and Filipino militants from the al-Qaida-linked group.

Abaya said Al-Ghozi, who was arrested in January 2002 but later escaped and was killed in a shoot-out with police last year, was the mastermind of the Manila bombings.

The Jemaah Islamiyah has been blamed for several bomb plots and attacks across Southeast Asia, including the Oct. 12, 2002, bombings in Bali, Indonesia, which killed 202 people.

The military has yet to establish if Naga and Pata were plotting to carry out bombing attacks when they were arrested.

Abaya could not say how many JI members were operating in the south.

"We don't know if their number went up, but obviously they were reduced with the arrest of the two," he said.

Some 30 JI operatives, all Indonesians, were monitored to have completed training in Mt. Kararao in Lanao del Sur in December last year.

Not farfetched

Abaya also disputed earlier reports that Naga and Pata were underlings of Muklis Yunos, alleged leader of the MILF's special operations group who was arrested in May 2003 and subsequently arraigned in connection with the bombings.

"I don't know who made the report that they are MILF SOG members. It's not far-fetched that they are also related to the JI considering that they were with Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi," he said.

Ermita said the investigation of the alleged links between the MILF and the JI is continuing.

"We are not only operating in Metro Manila. We are following up where they come from and that is all the way up to Mt. Kararao. They are being monitored by our intelligence authorities," he said.

Al-Ghozi and two other senior JI leaders, Riduan Isamuddin, alias Hambali, and Abubakar Bafana, were also indicted for the Rizal Day bombings.

Al-Ghozi was killed by military troops in October 2003, nearly three months after he escaped from Camp Crame.

Hambali was arrested in Thailand last year, while Bafana was detained in Singapore in connection with a terror plot in the city state. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

MARAMING SALAMAT PO!!!

In conformity with the President's priority program to curb corporate corruption and the state policy to prevent fraud and injury to the investing public we the undersigned purchasers of UNIVERSAL LEISURE CLUB, INC.(ULCI) shares manifest our support to this program as exemplified by the SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC) through the able LEADERSHIP of INCORRUPTIBLE Chairperson LILIA R. BAUTISTA, Commissioners FE ELOISA C. GLORIA, JOSELIA J. POBLADOR, JUANITA E. CUETO, JOSE ENRIQUEZ G. MARTINEZ, Director JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN and Former Director TOMAS SYQUIA, General Counsel VERNETTE UMALI-PACO, AUDITORS AND INVESTIGATING TEAM OF THE CFD AND CED, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES who paved the way for the return of our money/investment acquired through a landmark decision of OUR complaint in "In the matter of Universal Leisure Club, Inc."

To the SEC, you deserve to be a model of government service. To all of you, thank you and MABUHAY!!!

To our co-purchasers of ULCI shares, there will be a meeting to be held on August 14, 2004, Saturday at the Community Center of Mt Carmel Church at 10:00 a.m. Please bring your identification card and proof of investment or purchase. For details please contact, Lorna or Mildred at 810-8070 or 893-5400.

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

SC: Palace can't tell us what to do

Courts have duty to check abuses by gov't, says tribunal

By Philip C. Tubeza

A SUPREME Court official yesterday defended the judiciary's handling of economic cases, including the recent one involving the review of an Energy Regulatory Commission power rate hike approval, after criticisms that the country's courts are intruding into economic and political matters in which they have no expertise.

"The courts have the duty and the power to determine if there was abuse of discretion on the part of any government agency or instrumentality, including the ERC," said lawyer Gleo Guerra, senior chief staff officer at the SC public information office.

Guerra was reacting to a statement by presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye on Tuesday that judges should keep their hands off the ERC which he said was handling intricate power-related cases beyond the expertise of regular courts.

"That's just the opinion of Secretary Bunye. I don't think he can tell the courts what to do," said Guerra.

She said businessmen and government officials have nothing to fear as long as they obey the law in their business transactions or official actions.

Remanded to ERC

The Court of Appeals last week ordered the ERC to review its approval last year of a petition from the Manila Electric Co. for a 17-centavo per kilowatt hour rate increase.

The court said the state power regulator had "gravely erred" in approving the rate increase without going through Meralco's financial records.

The court remanded the case to the ERC and ordered it to have the Commission on Audit go over the books of Meralco.

Guerra defended the CA decision, saying that it was only doing its job under the law.

"The court was just acting within its constitutional mandate. It's a duty under the Constitution," she added.

Bunye's comments reflected an increasing frustration among government officials and business leaders with what they call "judicial activism" after a series of court decisions reversing contracts that had already been awarded.

BUNYE: Just his opinion

In June, SC Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban used an international conference of jurists in Pasay City to reject the criticism and explicate on the issue.

Activist judges

Panganiban said the Constitution itself expected judges to be "activists" when it gave the judiciary the duty to decide issues involving grave abuse of discretion on the part of any branch or agency of government, including the executive and legislative departments.

"It's a matter of protecting the public more than anything else when we become activists as our critics say. It's all a matter of protecting public interest....The Constitution imposes this intervention as a duty, not just as a power or as an authority. A power can be relinquished but a duty cannot, under any circumstance, be evaded," he said.

Panganiban said that the SC now defines "grave abuse of discretion" as any action done "contrary to the Constitution, the law or jurisprudence."

"It's a duty. [The court's] duty is to strike down grave abuse of discretion wherever and whenever it is," Panganiban said.

"The judiciary, especially the Supreme Court, must uphold the Constitution at all times. It cannot shrink, waver or equivocate. Otherwise, it will be censured with dereliction and abandonment of its solemn duty," he added.

RP contingent from Iraq hailed as heroes

By TJ Burgonio

TAUNTED for their early pullout from Iraq last month, the 96 Filipino peace-keepers yesterday earned praises from officials for helping rebuild the war-torn country and ease the Iraqis' burdens amid the constant terror threat.

The 55 soldiers, 26 policemen and 15 doctors, all clad in crisp uniforms, were honored by defense, military and foreign affairs officials in simple ceremonies at the military headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo.

Armed Forces' chief of staff Gen. Narciso Abaya said that the contingent's contributions to Iraq's security and stability far outweighed the scathing criticisms that came their way after their withdrawal from Iraq.

"You have accomplished your mission, accomplished it exceedingly well, and we are proud of you," he said, addressing the peace-keepers.

"There are some who would make light of your contributions, but ignore the critics, who sadly neither know the risks of soldiery nor the perils of peacekeeping," he added in his speech at the AFP Commissioned Officers' Club.

In their 11-month-long stay, the contingent carried out 67 major projects and 24 minor ones—including the construction of footbridges and public health centers—trained 2,266 Iraqis in law enforcement, and distributed relief goods, among other things.

Abaya further stressed that the peacekeepers left lasting impressions on the Iraqi people when they were ordered to withdraw and fly back home last July 20, a month ahead of schedule.

"Much has been said about our pullout that some would label as a retreat. But retrogade operations must be seen in the larger scheme of things, serving a higher purpose aligned to national interest," he said.

"The heroism, valor and courage of the Filipino soldier in Iraq are well-known to the Iraqis and allies. They are unquestioned."

President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the withdrawal of the Philippine humanitarian contingent to Iraq (PHCI) after a shadowy group of Iraqi militants threatened to behead Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz if the troops did not pull out by July 20.

The move drew stinging rebuke from the United States, Australia and other allies in the "coalition of the willing," saying this only emboldened the terrorists.

MEMBERS of the Philippine humanitarian contingent to Iraq flash the victory sign during yesterday's ceremonies honoring them as returning heroes. Their officers, including Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan and Col. Gerardo Layug (right photo) stand at attention at the start of the program. JOAN BONDOC

Ambassador Roy Cimatu, special Philippine envoy to the Middle East who was instructed to oversee the rescue of De la Cruz and the withdrawal of the troops, echoed Abaya's observations.

"All 96, small in number, but big in accomplishments, congratulations for a job well-done," he said in the same ceremony.

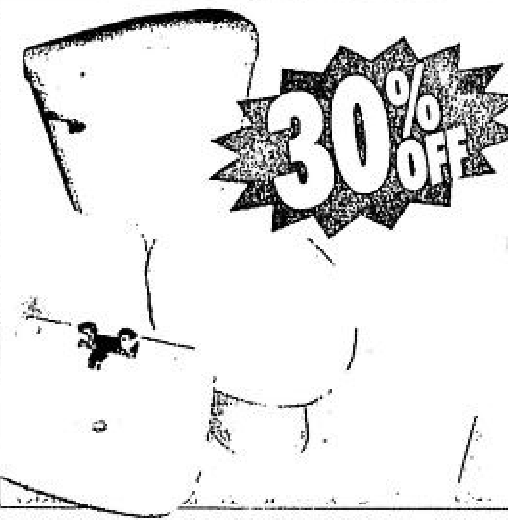
Cimatu also commended Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan, head of the contingent, who led the daring "rescue" of De la Cruz's 10 fellow Filipino drivers who were "held" by their Saudi employers in Iraq.

The employers eventually handed the drivers over to Palparan on seeing him and some American military officers, who were backed by tanks and helicopters, according to him.

"Today might be the last day you will wear your uniform, with that patch of our flag, but if you have the chance to wear it again sometime in the future I'm sure that your countrymen will extend to you admiration you expect due to a member of the PHCI who has served in Iraq well," Cimatu added.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rafael Seguis hailed them as heroes. "You are heroes to us always... You are real heroes. The Filipino nation is very really proud of you," he said.

Officials, led by Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, handed plaques of recognition to the commanders of the soldiers, policemen and doctors.



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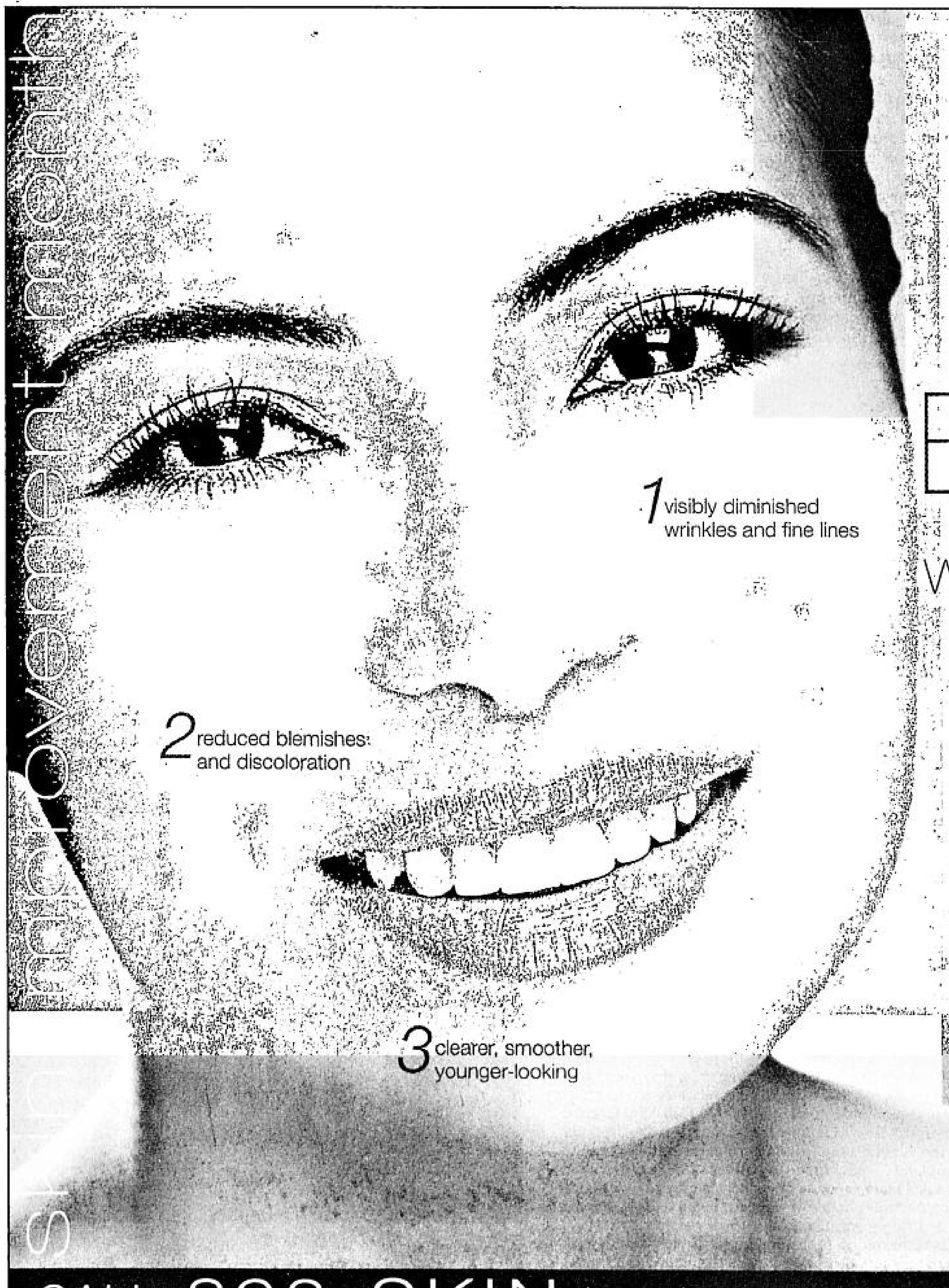

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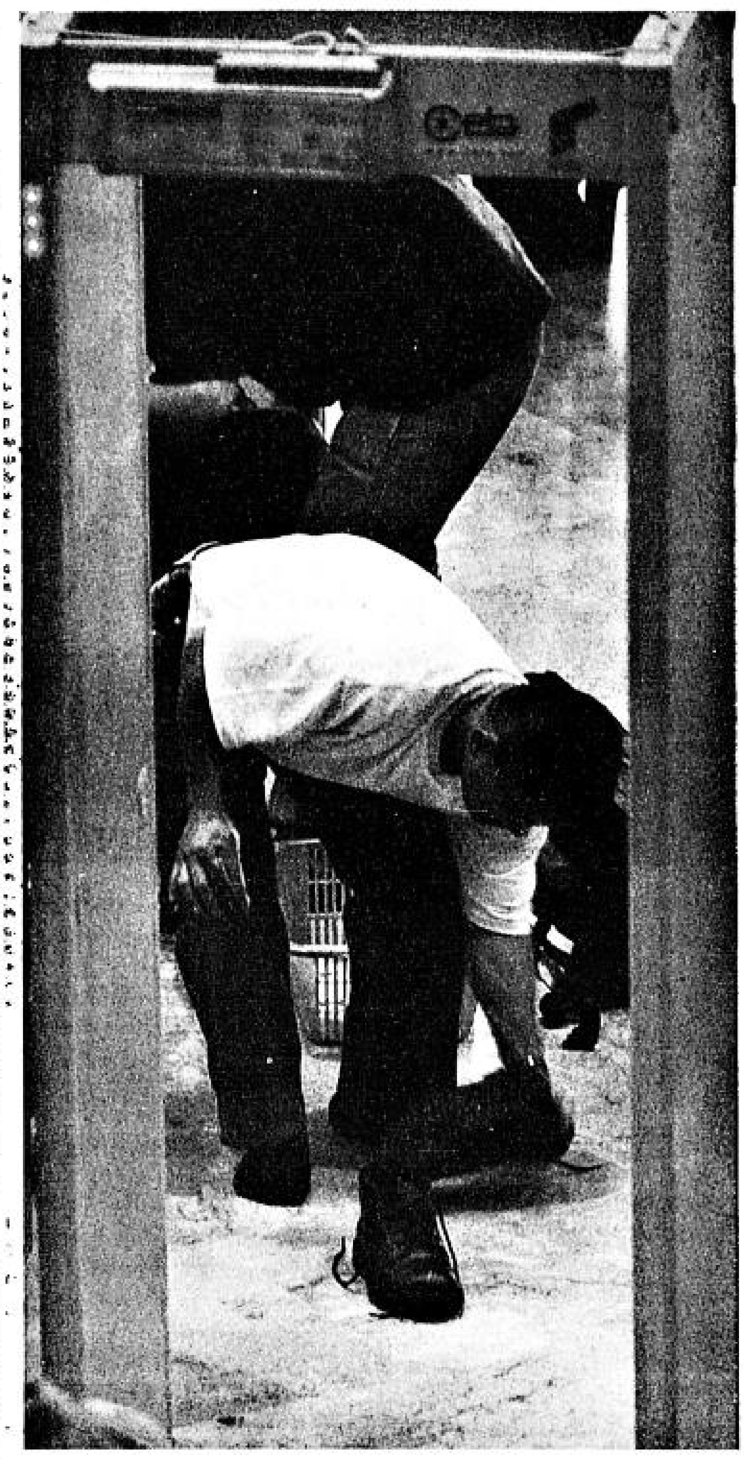


AIRPORT SECURITY
A passenger takes off his shoes at the security check area of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport as security alert heightened with the increase of terror alert level in the United States.

No rice crisis, NFA assures

THE NATIONAL rice supply is in a stable and comfortable level and there is no compelling reason to import the staple.

This was the assurance of National Food Authority Administrator and incoming agriculture secretary Arthur Yap, who sought to clarify reports that the NFA was seeking a standby authority to import.

Yap said the NFA has 18 days worth of security stocks with the industry inventory pegged at about 68 days.

Thus, he said, there is no compelling need for further rice imports under the standby authority granted by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

"NFA rice supplies from domestic procurement and regular imports are seen adequate to cover the country's buffer stock needs," he said in a press statement.

Yap explained that the NFA sought the standby authority in June to cover a possible shortfall in supply due to forecasts that the private sector and farmer's groups would fail to bring in their import allocations of 310,000 metric tons.

Rice purchases through the standby authority would allow the NFA to bring in the needed rice stocks within 14-21 days, versus the 60-90 days cycle for rice delivery through the regular bidding process.

Yap said the request for provisional authority was needed since the NFA did not have any firm indication on the final import volumes to be brought in by the farmers and other private sector groups at that time.

"As we have seen through past bitter experience in 1995, when the NFA's security stocks fell to dangerously low levels with no provisions for expedient replenishment, the agency must be pro-active in ensuring the nation's food security," he said.

However, Yap reported that the shortfall did not materialize even following the admission by the farmers groups and private sector traders that they were foregoing their import quotas due to the prevalent high international price of rice..

The NFA, in a press statement, also ensured the steady flow of rice stocks into the markets via more efficient distribution practices centered on the *palengke*. These efforts, it said, have resulted in more affordable rice for local consumers as commercial rice prices in NCR have gone down in the last few weeks.

Losing bidder sues PCGG over Ortigas lot

A DISGRUNTLED businessman is suing the Presidential Commission on Good Government for allegedly illegally leasing out a P13-billion sequestered Marcos property in Pasig City at a loss of about P60 million in potential annual revenue loss to the government.

In a complaint filed before the Office of the Ombudsman last Friday, Romeo C. Campos said the lease agreement for the 18.4-hectare property on Meralco Ave., which used to be the site of the Payanig sa Pasig carnival, was "grossly and manifestly disadvantageous to the government."

Also included in the suit is Ernesto Jalandoni, who heads the Mid-Pasig Land Development Corp. (MPLDC), a corporation under the Independent Realty Corp. (IRC), a group of companies that Chinese-Filipino businessman Jose Yao Campos, a crony of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, surrendered to the government in 1986.

The MPLDC is the registered owner of the Pasig property that was supposedly owned by Marcos. The lot is on the PCGG's list of sequestered assets to be privatized.

Romeo C. Campos, who claims not to be related to Jose Yao Campos, said the MPLDC entered into the lease agreement with businessman Gene de la Cruz in September 2002 to use 16,500 square meters of the Payanig lot for P30,000 to P60,000 per sq. meter.

The PCGG reportedly approved the deal a year later through a resolution.

Campos said the deal showed there was a "gross and manifest disadvantage to the government." He calculated the revenue loss at P5 million a month, or P60 million a year.

Campos said he was bringing the suit against the PCGG as a taxpayer. He said he had wanted to lease a part of the property himself to set up a car leasing business and was willing to pay more than the amount that the government got.

In early 2003, Campos said De la Cruz reportedly started subleasing the property to different business firms for P140,000 to P150,000 per sq. meter per month. *Armand Nocum*

Haydee hailed

VICE President Noli de Castro lauded yesterday Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) Chair Haydee Yorac for winning the Ramon Magsaysay Award for government service, finding her stint and participation in government and public service as a shining example for all the others to emulate.

De Castro said Yorac had maintained the dignity in government service by her dedication and sincerity. He cited Yorac's courage and bravery in transforming the country's bureaucracy through her leadership of the Commission on Elections, the National Unification Commission and the PCGG, wherein she made impressive accomplishments.

He particularly cited the herculean work she performed as Comelec chair in ensuring a peaceful and orderly election in Mindanao, where known political warlords ruled.

10 vying for SC post

By Philip C. Tubeza

THERE are 10 candidates vying for the Supreme Court vacancy left by retired Associate Justice Jose Vitug, according to Judicial and Bar Council documents.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has 90 days to appoint Vitug's replacement after he retired on July 14.

The aspirants for the SC include Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo, SC Court Administrator Presbitero Velasco Jr., Court of Appeals (CA) Presiding Justice Cancio Garcia, and CA Justices Portia Alino Hormachuelos, Godardo Jacinto and Rubert Reyes.

Sandiganbayan Justices Gregory Ong, Francisco Villaruz and Godofredo Legaspi; and University of the Philippines Prof. Ruben Balane are also candidates.

SC Clerk of Court Luzviminda Puno, who is also the JBC secretary, said the council would "generally" pick five finalists, who will make up the list that will be sent to the President.

Ms Arroyo would then choose from the list the next justice of the Supreme Court. But before that happens, the JBC would have to interview the aspirants.

Puno said most of the 10 candidates have already been interviewed but those who have not will be interviewed on August 30.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, August 5, 2004
18th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jer 31:31-34
Gospel: Mt 16:13-23

Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They said, "For some of them you are John the Baptist, for others Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Jesus asked them, "But you, who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "It is well for you, Simon Barjona, for it is not flesh or blood that has revealed this to you but my Father in heaven.

"And now I say to you: You are Peter (or Rock) and on this rock I will build my Church; and never will the powers of death overcome it.

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what you unbind on earth shall be unbound in heaven."

Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

From that day Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem; he would suffer many things from the Jewish authorities, the chief priests and the teachers of the Law. He would be killed and be raised on the third day.

Then Peter took him aside and began to reproach him, "Never, Lord! No, this must never happen to you." But Jesus turned to him and said, "Get behind me, Satan! You would have me stumble. You are their king not as God does, but as people do."

Commentary

Caesarea Philippi was situated at the foot of Mount Hermon in the north of the country. The inhabitants were mostly non-Jewish, and the area was scattered with temples of the ancient Syrian worship of Baal. Nearby was the reputed birthplace of the pagan god Pan. The newer variety of paganism was also represented: a temple in white marble to the godhead of Caesar.

It was against this pagan background that Jesus asks the question, "Who do people say I am?" And then the much more difficult question, "Who do you say I am?" That was Peter's moment. His profession of faith echoes all the more loudly against the pagan background, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied that "flesh and blood could not have revealed this to you but my Father in heaven." This is because "no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mt 11:27).

Peter spoke with the voice of God. But very soon he was to speak with the voice of Satan! That was Peter's fickle nature. At one moment he would draw his sword in defense of Jesus (Jn 18:10), but very soon he would deny that he ever even knew him (18:25). That is why Christian art represents him now as a proud figure holding the keys of the kingdom, and now with the cock crowing beside him. He is like everyone: strong and weak, faithful and faithless, good and bad...

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

GMA eyes express lanes, antigraft manual

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday asked Congress to pass a law creating express lanes in government offices where transactions can be made more speedy for taxpayers, but at extra cost.

Picking up on a suggestion from Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, the President also asked national and local departments to come up with transaction manuals to be distributed to taxpayers.

Ms Arroyo has been on an anticorruption campaign mode this week. She formed the Presidential Commission on Values Formation the other day to enforce her "road map" against corruption, and said she will be heading the commission herself.

During a public consultation in Caloocan City yesterday, Ms Arroyo dwelt on her anticorruption campaign, saying the best way to win the challenge was through good governance.

The President said the proposed express lanes would eliminate fixers in government offices. She said that with these lanes, the "grease money" that usually changes hands during such transactions will end up with government because of the increased fees.

The manuals for distribution would detail transaction procedures and steps and identify transaction rates and the officials concerned.

With the manuals, taxpayers will avoid falling prey to corrupt employees who ask for higher fees and would know whom to blame for inefficient service, Ms Arroyo said.

She asked Caloocan City legislators Luis Asistio and Oscar Malapitan to author a bill on the express lanes.

The President said she would include the scheme on the express lanes in the budget proposal for 2005.

Many residents flocked to the pulong bayan held at the public market on Caloocan's 10th Ave. to see the President.

Ms Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro have turned their campaign sorties into weekly community consultations.

The President strongly advised the public against going to the Senate or the House of Representatives to complain against corrupt government officials or irregular government deals.

"The role of the Senate and Congress is to make laws not to interpret them. If we think that one act is against the law or we see corruption in government, don't go to the Senate or Congress, go to court," she told her listeners.

The President repeated this advice five times during the pulong bayan.

She was visibly irked when she was told that the Gotesco land scam—where a public high school was displaced by a giant shopping mall—had not been resolved even after a Senate investigation had declared it the "mother of all scams." She hinted this could be because the complaint was brought to the Senate which she said was not the one that decides whether something is illegal or not. "It is the courts," she said.

Also included in the President's anticorruption program is the abolition of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, an agency that government officials love to hate.

The PAGC's functions will be merged with that of the Ombudsman's Office which will be turned into an agency similar to Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption. *Edson C. Tandoc, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Correction

IN THE July 26 issue, a front-page special report—"13th Congress: Old Wine in New Bottle"—failed to mention Rep. Uliran T. Joaquin (NPC, 1st district, Laguna) as among the women legislators who are serving their third and last term in the House of Representatives.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

POLITICAL LAW (CONSTITUTIONAL LAW)/REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—The power to investigate or conduct preliminary investigation on charges against any public officers or employees Thus, with the jurisprudential declarations that the Ombudsman and the DOJ have concurrent jurisdiction to conduct preliminary investigation, the respective heads of said offices came up with OMB-DOJ Joint Circular No. 95-001 for the proper guidelines of their respective prosecutors in the conduct of their investigations. A close examination of the circular supports the view of the respondent Ombudsman that it is just an internal agreement between the Ombudsman and the DOJ. To reiterate for emphasis, the power to investigate or conduct preliminary investigation on charges against any public officers or employees may be exercised by an investigator or by any provincial or city prosecutor or their assistants, either in their regular capacities or as deputized Ombudsman prosecutors. The fact that all prosecutors are in effect deputized Ombudsman prosecutors under the OMB-DOJ Circular is a mere superfluity. The DOJ Panel need not be authorized nor deputized by the Ombudsman to conduct the preliminary investigation for complaints filed with it because the DOJ's authority to act as the principal law agency of the government and investigate the commission of crimes under the Revised Penal Code is derived from the Revised Administrative Code. Thus, there is not even a need to delegate the conduct of the preliminary investigation to an agency which has the jurisdiction to do so in the first place. However, the Ombudsman may assert its primary jurisdiction at any stage of the investigation. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Justice Austria-Martinez, Honasan vs Panel of Investigating Prosecutors of the Department of Justice, G.R. No. 159747]

BY R. B. VERA

Bishop clarifies report

By Martin P. Marfil

LINGAYEN Archbishop Oscar Cruz yesterday denied reports that he was leading a campaign against politicians who support population control measures pending in Congress.

At the same time, he said that there was no such thing as a Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' committee on marriage.

This came a day after Cruz, who was described in the story as the head of the CBCP's committee on marriage, was quoted by a wire agency as saying that bishops would meet with members of Congress to convince them to defeat bills promoting family planning.

"I find it both surprising and embarrassing," Cruz said, referring to the report.

INQTV TV
INQUIRER sales and marketing vice president Pepito Olarte shakes the hand of Eleazar Kasilag for winning a 21-inch television set for sending the best "fearless view" last week. He is the sixth winner of the Tanong ng Bayan SMS promo. INQTV, which airs Thursday, 8 p.m. on ABC, will be giving away seven more TV sets until September.

Partial list of chairmen

THE HOUSE yesterday released a partial list of committee chairmanships.

Of the 27 committee chairmanships resolved as of yesterday, 12 went to Lakas, five each to the NPC and Liberal Party, two each to Kampi and party-list groups and one to the Nacionalist Party.

The list includes:

Economic Affairs, Rep. Joey Salceda (Lakas, Albay); Energy, Rep. Alipio Badelles (NPC, Lanao del Norte); Trade and Industry, Rep. Junie Cua (LP, Quirino); Cooperative Development, Rep. Ernesto Pablo (party-list Apec)

Ecology, Rep. Nereus Acosta (LP, Bukidnon); Housing and Urban Development, Rep. Eduardo Zialcita (Lakas, Paranaque); Civil, Political and Human Rights, Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales (party-list Akbayan)

Constitutional Amendments, Rep. Constantino Jaraula (Lakas, Cagayan de Oro); Games and Amusement, Rep. Joel Mayo Almario (Lakas, Davao Oriental); Justice, Rep. Simeon Datumanong (Lakas, Maguindanao)

Legislative Franchises, Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lakas, Bukidnon), Foreign Affairs, Rep. Antonio Cuenco (Lakas, Cebu); National Cultural Communities, Rep. Solomon Chungalao (LP, Ifugao); National Defense, Rep. Roilo Golez (Kampi, Parañaque)

Public Order and Security, Rep. Amado Espino (Kampi, Pangasinan); Veteran Affairs, Rep. Tomas Dumpit (NPC, La Union); Agriculture and Food, Rep. Benasing Macarambon (NPC, Lanao del Sur); Agrarian Reform, Rep. Gregorio Ipong (NPC, North Cotabato)

Health, Rep. Antonio Yapha (NPC, Cebu); People's Participation, Rep. Ernesto Nieva (LP, Manila); Oversight, Rep. Danilo Suarez (LP, Quezon); Basic Education, Rep. Edmund Reyes (Lakas, Marinduque)

Higher Education, Rep. Cynthia Villar (Nacionalista, Las Pinas); Revision of Laws, Rep. Orlando Fua (Lakas, Siquijor); Rural Development, Rep. Ariel Olano (Lakas, Davao del Norte)

Special Committee on East Asian Growth Area, Rep. Cora Malanyaon (Lakas, Davao Oriental); and chair of the House contingent to the Commission on Appointments, Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas-Kampi, Surigao del Sur).

The Senate is expected to resolve next the chairmanship issue of the chamber's 36 committees.

Senate President Franklin Drilon yesterday said the majority would announce the final committee assignments on Monday.

Although Drilon announced on Monday that the chairmanships of 21 committees had been resolved, apparently there had been changes.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., said that the nine-member minority had been offered six committees and that members had accepted them.

Pimentel has accepted the committee on cooperatives while Sen. Jamby Madrigal has accepted the chairmanship of the committees of youth, women and family relations as well as the cultural communities.

Sen. Serge Osmena got the committee on social justice, welfare and rural development while Sen. Alfredo Lim got the committee on public information and mass media.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada has accepted the committee on housing.

Pimentel said that Senators Edgardo Angara, Panfilo Lacson and Juan Ponce Enrile had no committee chairmanships so far.

Separation day for RP twins

From page A1

scan on the night of Aug. 3—yesterday morning, Manila time—at the Children's Hospital (CHAM) in Montefiore in New York.

Today, at this very moment, the boys are undergoing the fourth and final surgery aimed at enabling them to lead separate lives.

The surgeons have said the "extremely delicate" procedure (which started at 7 last night, Manila time) could take 24 hours.

Send the twins a good thought. Make that two.

Rocking in each other's eye

"I just want it to be over for them," Arlene said, sounding very anxious. "They've suffered too long. I'm scared, yes, but hopeful. I can't wait to see Carl and Clarence finally looking at each other in the eye. That moment will make all our struggles in the past two years worthwhile."

Indeed, it's been a long and exhausting journey from Silay, Negros Occidental, where the Aguirres hail from.

"I still cry when I think of everything we've been through. We're in a foreign country, we have no relatives here. But I'm just so thankful we got to this day, and I would do it all again for my children," Arlene said.

She and her twin boys arrived in New York last September. Arlene said the most difficult part of each surgery was seeing her boys being sedated.

"I always wonder if they would wake up again," she admitted.

Family is different

A nurse by training, she is aware of the innumerable risks, but is comforted by her "absolute confidence" in the medical team.

Moreover, she said, she drew strength "from God, first and foremost," and from many people all over the world whom she was sure had been praying for Carl and Clarence.

REUTERS/MONTEFIORE MEDICAL CENTER PHOTO

SURGICAL team made up of 16 persons at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore in New York tackles the delicate surgery to finally separate the conjoined twins Carl and Clarence Aguirre Thursday (Manila time).

An additional boost, extended by the Philippine Airlines Foundation, was the arrival in New York of her mother, Evelindia Aguirre (Arlene is a single parent), on Saturday morning.

"Every week since September, I have called her for encouragement," Arlene said of her 55-year-old mother. "I have made friends here, but family is still different."

But she said her well of courage were really Carl and Clarence. "I look at them, and I know I cannot give up," she said.

She had not eaten well for close to a month now, Arlene said. Yesterday, she was clearly a bundle of nerves.

"This tension is the worst I have experienced in my entire life," she said. "But I try my best to stay healthy, because I know there's still a lot to hurdle after the fourth surgery."

She has been advised that it could take months before the final surgery could be fully assessed.

Gratitude

Between procedures, which have all been held at CHAM, the Aguirres have stayed at the Blythedale Children's Hospital. The two institutions are donating their services.

"There are no words to describe the care and support the staff in both hospitals have given me and my twins," Arlene said. "I couldn't ask for more."

The whole Filipino community in New York had been looking out for them, Arlene added. "They call to ask how we're doing, they send us food, and assure us that they're praying for us. Actually, I have learned one valuable lesson during our stay here: that people, regardless of nationality, are basically good."

Filipinos on team

A member of today's surgical team is Dr. Willy Lopez, a Filipino neurosurgeon who was also on board during the second surgery last November.

Lopez and team leader Dr. Jim Goodrich, head of pediatric neurosurgery at CHAM, trained together at the Neurological Institute in Columbia University in the 1980s.

GMA intervenes to avert House row

From page A1

measures, Congressman Teves and myself have been prevailed upon by the Speaker and the President (Arroyo) to agree to a compromise."

"Thus, the ways and means committee will be on a term-sharing between myself and Congressman Teves in that sequence."

Teves said: "The President herself has asked the two of us to help each other."

"I will serve as senior vice chair while Lapuz is the chair and we will switch positions after 18 months, " he added.

Main committee

Ms Arroyo had asked Congress in her State of the Nation Address to pass eight revenue measures aimed at raising P80 billion for the cash-strapped administration.

Under the Constitution, all revenue measures must emanate from the House, and the ways and means committee is the main panel that screens proposed tax measures.

Lapus is a member of the Nationalist People's Coalition, an alliance partner of Lakas, which had earlier pledged the committee to Lapus.

Teves, for his part, was a former Lakas member who abandoned his party affiliation on July 25 and joined Kampi to pursue his bid for the chairmanship of the committee.

While Lakas and Kampi are part of the Rainbow 4 coalition in the House, the two parties had been trying to outfox each other for dominance of the House.

Talk with GMA

Before news of the term-sharing arrangement was released yesterday, Teves told the INQUIRER Tuesday night that Ms Arroyo had told him over the phone that she had committed the chairmanship of the ways and means committee to the NPC, a party founded by businessman Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco.

Lapuz had earlier warned that the NPC would have to review its coalition with Lakas-CMD if Teves was appointed to the post. Lapus had also previously opposed the idea of a term-sharing.

Despite his disappointment, Teves said he promised Ms Arroyo he would help her in her efforts to increase revenues through more efficient collection but vowed to strongly oppose the shift to gross income taxation.

Oldest at 84

Teves said Ms Arroyo realized his desire to help the government achieve a balanced budget and had invited him to present his revenue proposals at the next meeting of the Legislative-Economic Development Advisory Council (Ledac) on Tuesday next week.

In a privilege speech on Tuesday, Teves said the ways and means committee was charged with the vital responsibility of raising revenues.

"Performance, experience and expertise borne out of seniority, especially during these critical times, should be the deciding factors when choosing the chairperson," he said.

At 84, he is also the oldest legislator.

Teves blamed the huge revenue shortfall on poor tax collection which he said was a direct result of corrupt tax collectors and taxpayers.

Teves proposals

Teves proposed the following measures:

- Institute a revenue collection mechanism that can increase revenue collection before yearend to reduce the deficit to not more than P150 billion;
- Legislate measures that will plug the loopholes in the tax system to achieve a balanced budget by end-2005; and
- Legislate new tax measures to raise more revenues that will help amortize our existing debts.

To implement these measures, Teves said, more effective methods of estimating and monitoring the potential and existing tax base should be institutionalized.

Teves noted that there were over 451,309 corporations registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, but only 39,833 corporations paid taxes amounting to P110.8 billion in 2002.

He also cited data from the National Statistics Office which showed that out of 4.4 million taxable families, only 700,000 paid income tax. Out of that number, 88 percent were employees and 12 percent self-employed.

War amputees get chance to stand on 2 feet again

From page A1

wore short pants and even hid in a dark room whenever I heard a car passing in front of our house."

Second chance

Hundreds of others robbed of limbs by the three-decade-old conflict between the Philippine government and Moro rebels are getting a second chance as a ceasefire enters its second year.

War-weary civilians are starting to rebuild their lives and pursue their dreams, but the conflict is never far from anyone's mind.

Previous ceasefires have proved fragile and the root of the conflict—the rebels' demand for self-determination and the government's refusal to concede—remains unresolved.

Rita Aquino, project manager for French NGO Handicap International, did not plan a long-term project in Cotabato City when she began operations in Mindanao last September, but her seven-man team has since been swamped with requests for artificial legs, braces and wheelchairs.

Cultural barrier

She suspects there are still hundreds of victims hiding in Central Mindanao, scene of the fiercest fighting, many of them too scared to seek help for fear of ridicule or being accused of fighting for the rebels.

"We wanted to reach out to more persons with disability but we are facing a strong cultural barrier and even more formidable emotional and psychological obstacles," Aquino told Reuters.

Suffering in silence

In July, Handicap International volunteers discovered more than 30 people with disabilities during a visit to one coastal village, many of them war victims.

"We were shocked to find out there were hundreds of cases in conflict-affected areas and most of them refused to come out and be given assistance," said Aquino.

"There are so many of them but there was no assistance available."

Until her aunt brought her for treatment, Cameda Dimatunday had not left her small, mountain village since her left leg was ripped apart by shrapnel from a howitzer shell as she and her family prepared to flee fighting four years ago.

She sat quietly in a corner at Handicap International's orthopedic and prosthetic center that was set up with Japanese aid at a Roman Catholic-operated hospital in Cotabato City.

PROSTHETIC technician works on a fiber-glass leg at the Handicap International office in Cotabato. REUTERS

"She lives in her own world," said aunt Nanayaon Dimasangkay. "She is too ashamed, too embarrassed and too insecure, trusting only her immediate family."

With demand for artificial legs outstripping supply, Dimatunday and Marfil may have to wait six to eight weeks before they can wear their new legs, during which time they receive counseling and physical therapy.

Aquino said the workshop could only manufacture two full artificial legs or four half legs each month. One leg costs between P6,000 and P8,000.

"There are dozens more Dimatundays, still in hiding in the conflict-affected communities in Central Mindanao," said Aquino.

For Marfil, the long period of silent suffering that began when he was caught in crossfire 10 years ago is almost over.

"I've always wanted to take my children to the town plaza every night for a walk," he said. "I can't wait for that day to show them that I can walk again without these sticks." *Reuters*

Lacson-Angara feud erupts in shouting match

From page A1

one another's face during the last election, finally figured in a confrontation on Monday.

No, wait. Both senators confirmed the heated exchange during the incident, with Angara denying it was a confrontation, although he started it.

It was during the caucus of the Senate minority, when the discussion came to who really were its members. Angara stood up to express his "reservations" about Lacson, raising three rather pointed accusations in the process.

Lacson would tell reporters later that the charges were "rubbish" and "outlandish," and that he had effectively parried each one. He would remain with the nine-member minority, he insisted.

Angara and Lacson had been squabbling since Angara supported the presidential candidacy of Fernando Poe Jr., forcing Lacson to run as an independent and splitting the opposition.

The incumbent President Macapagal-Arroyo won.

3 instances

"I cited three instances [in which] I personally believed, and the entire opposition believed, that he showed he was less than a loyal member of the opposition," Angara told reporters. He would not say what those "instances" were.

But Lacson was more than willing; he was "thankful" that it was all out there, he said, so he could air his side.

Lacson said Angara accused him of meeting with First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo at the Macapagals' residence in Forbes Park during the campaign period.

Lacson said it was implied that he had cut a deal with Arroyo, and that this was "part of the reason" that he did not withdraw his candidacy.

Lucio Tan factor

Lacson said he told Angara that the only time he saw Arroyo was during the Senate hearings on the Jose Pidal accounts, which he had accused the First Gentleman of owning.

Lacson said Angara then accused him of meeting with the leaders of Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino and demanding P300 million in exchange for his withdrawal. He said Angara also believed he had demanded that the KNP put Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco on the spot by declaring that the businessman was supporting Poe's bid.

It was Angara's contention, Lacson recounted, that this demand had been imposed by businessman Lucio Tan, a chief supporter of his (Lacson's). He said he challenged Angara to identify the KNP leaders who had dispensed the "information," because "they are liars."

The last accusation hurled against Lacson was that Tan had paid him to stay in the running.

Lacson bristled: "Just to emphasize that those charges were rubbish, I swore on the lives of my loved ones."

Lim, Estrada convinced

Sen. Alfredo Lim believed him and said so, Lacson recalled. He quoted Lim as saying that his rejoinders should "put the matter to rest." He said Sen. Jinggoy Estrada agreed to this.

Lacson said Angara's last words were to "defer judgment on whether I am satisfied or not."

Angara confirmed that he said: "I'm not satisfied [with the explanation] but let's leave it at that."

That was a shock, Lacson fumed: "He lost my respect."

No permanent enemies

But all's well that ends well, because it seems there are no permanent enemies in politics, as in show biz.

Asked whether Lacson could remain a member of the minority, Angara replied in the affirmative, if grudgingly. "He expressed his desire to join us, so we will take him in."

But could they actually work together?

He could work "with anyone," Angara quipped.

So could he, Lacson sniffed: "I can work with the minority even if one or two don't like my face."

DOJ ready to ask US to bring back Gracia

From page A1

her husband, Martin, fueled the calls for a reopening of the investigation when he insisted in an interview with the INQUIRER on Tuesday that there was such an alleged collusion.

Suspicions of connivance between some military officers and the bandit gang arose after the Abu Sayyaf bandits, with their hostages, were cornered by security forces in the Dr. Jose Maria Torres hospital in Lamitan, Basilan, in June 2001.

Hours later, the Abu Sayyaf broke out of the encirclement, taking the hostages with them.

A ceasefire that allowed the bandits to escape at the height of the siege bolstered the allegations.

In his testimony in March 2002 before the Senate committees on national defense and security, justice and human right, which investigated the Lamitan siege, Recio gave this account:

"What I want to point out, which I think is important in this thing, is well, we were surrounded in the hospital and probably 30 or 40 minutes before we were led to the backdoor, there were some shots from farther off and our guard, his name is Kosovo, he said—he kinda draw back and he said, 'Hey, that's ours'."

No firing

"So, after that, there was no firing and then I just—they all got, all of them, even our guards, went to the front door, started pointing guns in front and I could see them shouting, I could hear them shouting, 'Allahu Akbar' to each other.

"The ones who came in front and then inside and the radioman was kinda harassed in trying to get some signal from his radio and they were shouting 'Allahu Akbar' to each other and they were shouting, they were asking instructions, they were probably trying to identify who they were and they just said 'Ah it's all right. So we can get out now'."

The INQUIRER has a copy of the joint committee report with excerpts from Recio's testimony.

Recio, in a talk with the INQUIRER, expressed dismay that his testimony was swept aside by the DOJ.

Twenty-seven other residents from Basilan also testified at the Senate hearings, most of them supporting the connivance allegations.

DOJ to release findings

Gutierrez said the DOJ would also release "very soon" its findings in its own yearlong investigation into collusion allegations that Burnham referred to in the book that she wrote about her captivity in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf, titled "In the Presence of My Enemies."

"This should be released so that we can inform the public about the results of our inquiry," she said.

Prosecutors have said that Burnham told them in a pre-trial meeting that she had "no personal knowledge" of a military-Abu Sayyaf connivance.

Gutierrez said she had ordered the prosecutors that investigated the case to come out with the report this week, "if possible."

Gutierrez also rejected suggestions that State Prosecutor Nestor Lazaro, who erroneously claimed that Burnham had cleared the military during her court testimony last week, should be disciplined.

"He had no ill-motive. It was just that that was his interpretation of what happened," she said.

Gutierrez asked for understanding from the public, saying that Lazaro and the three other prosecutors present at the hearing were burdened by more than 20 cases involving the Abu Sayyaf.

"We should consider their situation. They are doing everything they can. They are among the best prosecutors in the department and they are trying to rid our country of terrorism," Gutierrez said.

Circumstantial evidence

"The Senate committees are of the belief that, indeed, collusion between some officers of the AFP and the ASG exists," the Senate committees' report said in their conclusions and recommendations.

The report also said that this belief was based on circumstantial evidence.

The report took note that the ceasefire that allowed the bandits to escape through the backdoor of the hospital was the offshoot of the pullout of the militia detailed at the back of the premises.

"And why were the compounds of the church-hospital peppered with bullets and heavy fires in the later hours of June 2, 2001 when the ASG has left? Is it to create an impression that mighty operations were made?" the report also said.

Citing "strong circumstantial evidence," the Senate recommended that the DOJ and the Ombudsman conduct further investigation into the charge of collusion.

Court martial proceedings

It also recommended court martial proceedings against Maj. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, the former chief of Task Force Comet assigned in Basilan, Sulu and Zamboanga; Col. Juvenal Narcise, then commander of the 103rd Brigade based in Basilan, and Maj. Eliseo Campued, then executive officer of the 18th IB.

In her book, Burnham said she found it strange that the military did not pursue the Abu Sayyaf after the bandits broke out of the Lamitan hospital.

She also said that, during her more than a year of captivity, hostages were told that an Armed Forces general wanted a 50 percent cut of the ransom demanded by Abu Sayyaf for the release of the captives. She did not say in her book who relayed this information to the hostages.

Differences

The Senate committees' report differed sharply with that of the House defense committee, which also looked into the incident and later said there was no evidence of collusion. But the House committee affirmed the payment of ransom for the victims' release.

Pro-administration congressmen were not keen on reinvestigating the incident, saying the more important matter was to prosecute the ASG kidnappers now detained.

Lakas-CMD Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. of Surigao del Sur and Nationalist People's Coalition Rep. Joseph "Ace" Durano of Cebu said the prosecution of the ASG bandits was, in fact, the reason Burnham returned to the country to testify against her former captors.

They added Congress should instead check if the military and police had already improved their capability to respond to similar kidnapping incidents, on the basis of the recommendations made by the House committee on national defense, then chaired by Pichay.

They said the 12th Congress, through the defense committee, had already exhaustively probed the Lamitan incident.

Don't muddle real issue

"The alleged collusion should not muddle the real issue, which is the crimes committed by the ASG. What is important is for the captured ASG bandits to pay for their crimes and for the court to give justice to their victims," Pichay said.

Pichay said among the recommendations made by his committee were for the military to correct several shortcomings which hampered the war against the ASG bandits, including lack of logistics, armaments and equipment, and inadequate command leadership in the field.

"There will be discussions with the AFP on how to institutionalize these needed changes to improve its capability," Pichay said.

Done the part

Durano, chair of the committee on public order and security during the 12th Congress, said it was best to put the collusion issue at rest.

"We should move on and just await completion of the court hearings on the ASG crimes," Durano said.

Durano added the House had done its part in ferreting out the truth on the Lamitan incident while the military has also investigated the matter, and both concluded there was no collusion.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

President Arroyo appears to be weighing the pros and cons of eating pancit which Vice President De Castro is about to serve her at a carinderia on 10th Avenue, Poblacion Public Market, Caloocan City. EDWIN BACASMAS

Why world oil prices are so high

From page A1

than needed to prevent stocks building.

Higher demand means that a shortage of refining capacity that has plagued the United States for the last four years has now spread to Asia, again leaving the global oil supply system more exposed to disruption.

Lack of spare supply capacity

Since prices hit the $40+ level that threatens to slow economic growth, the Opec producer cartel has boosted its production to the highest level in 25 years in an effort to keep prices under control. This has left little spare capacity outside top world exporter—Saudi Arabia.

The strain on the world supply system has left it more vulnerable to supply disruptions and increased the likelihood of price spikes. This has attracted further buying interest from hedge funds betting that prices could go even higher.

"High Opec output normally expected to ease tightness, is actually having bullish impacts as the markets realize the limits of what Opec can do," said Washington-based consultants PFC Energy in a report.

Oil companies have also sought to become more efficient and free up capital by holding lower stocks. This has given the industry less of a cushion against sudden supply disruptions.

Wave of mergers

A wave of mergers following the 1998-1999 price crash also reduced the number of companies holding inventory. A series of supply disruptions last year—the war in Iraq, Venezuela's general strike and ethnic unrest in Nigeria—cut into stocks.

Opec, which controls around half the world's exports, has also in recent years worked hard to stop stocks building, especially in the United States, during periods of seasonally weak demand.

Opec ministers have announced plans to cut production before prices start to weaken, helping to create the conditions for a sustained price decline, pricing physical oil at a premium to future supplies. This pricing structure gives refiners no chance to replenish stocks with lower-priced crude or products and forces them to buy at the last minute.

Political tensions in ME

Political tensions in the Middle East and violence in Iraq have undermined traders' confidence in the security of supply from the region, which pumps a third of the world's oil. Iraqi exports have been hit by sabotage attacks.

Traders fear Islamic militants could target oil infrastructure in Opec's biggest producer—Saudi Arabia. May's deadly attacks on foreign oil workers in the Saudi oil city of Khobar fostered fears of a larger attack on the kingdom's tightly protected oil facilities.

The financial crisis at Russian oil giant Yukos, which produces around 20 percent of Russia's crude, has intensified concerns. The company has warned that it could be forced to cut production as the Russian government pursues payment of $3.4 billion in tax arrears.

Venezuelan oil production is still suffering the fallout of the strike 18 months ago that cut capacity. A referendum this month on Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's rule could again destabilize exports from a big US supplier. Civil unrest in Opec member Nigeria is another flash point.

Supply security concerns have spurred many countries to increase strategic inventories, withdrawing supply from an already tight market. The United States continues to fill its strategic petroleum reserve despite high prices. Other countries including India, South Korea, Taiwan and China are building reserves or plan to start soon.

The post-Sept. 11 chill in relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States has raised concerns that Riyadh may no longer be willing to act as a guarantor of cheap oil as it did during the 1990s.

Refinery bottlenecks

Environmental regulations are pushing up the price of making fuel, forcing companies to build expensive new facilities and making it harder to ship supplies between regions.

US gasoline demand is rising due in part to the growing number of low-mileage-per-gallon sports utility vehicles on America's highways. The United States accounts for about 45 percent of world gasoline consumption.

US gasoline demand drives a growing requirement for high-quality light, low sulphur crude. China is competing for those grades of oil to meet demand for transportation fuels, lifting the price premium for low sulphur crude. Most of Opec's crude is heavy and high sulphur.

"No matter how high Opec output goes, refiners are still struggling to replenish low product stocks and get enough sweet crude, both factors over which Opec has little control," said PFC Energy.

In the United States, individual states demand an array of different gasoline blends. This makes it harder to transport supplies between states and to import supplies from abroad.

Environmental regulations have made it more expensive to build new refineries, and much harder to get the necessary permits.

Scarcer oil

Big oil reservoirs are becoming harder to find and more expensive to develop. Many of the oil provinces outside Opec are mature, which means that finds are now smaller, need more costly technology to develop and fall faster from peak production.

Oil companies have also been cautious on spending since the 1998-1999 price crash slashed their share prices and triggered a spate of mergers. They have focused on large-scale projects, which will give them good margins.

Many new ventures are in remote areas, which demand expensive equipment and are more susceptible to delays.

Non-Opec supply growth outside Russia before the price crash averaged more than one million bpd (barrel per day). Since then it has been negligible.

Non-Opec supply

Forecasts of non-Opec supply growth, especially when the rebound in Russian production is stripped out, have consistently been overstated.

The increased cost of finding and developing non-Opec oil has fueled speculation that oil markets are a good long-term bet. Troubles in Royal Dutch/Shell's reserves have reinforced the view that oil is becoming harder to find.

No foreign investment

In Opec, which holds around two-thirds of the world's oil reserves, many of the bigger nations either do not allow foreign investment in oil, or they have unattractive investment and legal terms.

This has slowed down production capacity growth in Opec nations, meaning that most are already producing flat out to meet demand. *Reuters*

39 lawmakers form alliance vs new taxes

From page A1

The alliance revolves around House Resolution No. 91 that calls on the ways and means committee to look into the P285 billion in yearly tax losses and to formulate remedial measures.

"The government's fiscal problems have been largely self-inflicted ... due to value-added tax and income tax evasion, accelerated tariff cuts since the last decade, and overly generous fiscal incentives and tax exemptions given to favored industries," the resolution said.

The resolution noted that tax collection decreased from 17 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1997 to only 12.3 percent in 2003, "representing one of the lowest tax efforts among Asian countries." GDP is the total value of goods produced and services rendered in a year.

GMA's tax measures

President Macapagal-Arroyo wants Congress to pass eight tax measures, saying that improving collection alone was not enough to cover the budget deficit, which is expected to reach P200 billion this year, and finance her pro-poor programs.

The tax measures involve shifting from the net income to gross income taxation, repealing the value added tax system, raising taxes on liquor and cigarettes and petroleum products, taxing windfall profits of telecommunication firms, rationalizing fiscal incentives, instituting a targeted tax amnesty, creation of a performance-driven system for revenue agencies.

Ms Arroyo already raised the tariff on petroleum products just before the opening of the 13th Congress. The President can issue an order raising the tariff while Congress is not in session.

Ill-advised

Party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño (Bayan Muna), lead author of the resolution, said that the imposition of new taxes was "ill-advised at this time when poverty and unemployment rates are at historic highs."

"Before we pass new taxes, we must first find out why our tax collections are low and how to improve tax efficiency," Casiño said.

Party-list Rep. Rodante Marcoleta (Alagad) said that his constituents—the urban poor—were the ones most affected by new taxes, whose costs are usually passed on by big business to their consumers.

Marcoleta said that plugging the P285 billion in yearly tax leak was more than enough to fill in the P80 billion, which Malacañang wants to raise from its proposed new taxes.

Party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano (Anakpawis) said more legislators were expected to sign the resolution as there was enough evidence to show that inefficient revenue collection was one of the reasons behind the budget deficit.

The resolution said that a 15-percent improvement in the tax effort based on last year's collections could generate up to P80 billion, or the same amount the government hopes to raise from the new tax measures.

"The deficit problem stems from government's failure to raise enough revenues to keep with rising expenditures, particularly debt servicing which currently eats up a third of the national budget and about 75 per cent of the government tax and non-tax revenues," the resolution said.

Alert has allies in the Senate. Both administration and opposition senators have objected to the proposed tax measures, saying that Ms Arroyo should go after tax cheats and plug leaks in revenue collection instead of imposing additional taxes.

Oil soars, hard times loom

From page A1

giantoro said that Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest exporter, had spare production capacity but could not raise output immediately. *(See related story page A1.)*

"The oil price is very high, it's crazy. There is no additional supply," Purnomo told reporters in Jakarta.

Seven times

Since January, oil firms in the Philippines have raised the prices of gasoline seven times for a cumulative total of between P4.70 and P4.81 a liter. The prices of diesel have gone up six times for a total of P3.50 to P3.65 a liter.

Right after oil companies raised the prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos a liter on Tuesday, the benchmark Dubai crude soared to a 13-year high of $37.50 a barrel.

Oil refiners Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. both use the Dubai crude as their basis for pricing their products.

The Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished products, which Caltex Philippines Inc. and other smaller oil firms use in pricing their products, also surged to $50.45 for unleaded gasoline and to $49.13 for diesel.

Even the international contract prices of liquefied petroleum (LPG) gas had climbed almost $20 per metric ton (MT) this month to $344 per MT from only $327 per MT in July.

LPG

Smaller LPG distributors have hinted on a price hike of 50 centavos to P1 a kilogram. Bigger LPG players Petron, Shell, Caltex and Total (Philippines) Corp., however, have not indicated that they will raise their prices soon.

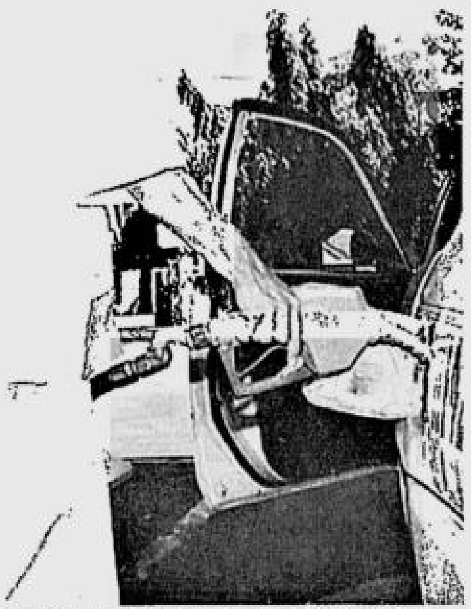
With world prices showing no sign of letting up, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said local pump prices were not likely to go down in the coming days.

Despite the looming price increases, Perez said the government was not keen on slashing any existing tariffs and other taxes on crude and petroleum products because the national government had a budget deficit problem to deal with.

"I'd like to reiterate that reducing taxes would only artificially bring prices down and even adversely affect our country's budget," he said. "The more we reduce taxes, the more we would discourage conservation. We need to renew our call for fuel conservation and efficiency."

He said oil products in the country were among the least taxed in the region, with tariffs and excise taxes accounting for only 19 percent of the total pump price of gasoline and 10 percent of the price of diesel.

Even with a proposed P2 increase in specific taxes for all petroleum products, he said gasoline and diesel would still cost relatively lower than those sold in neighboring oil-importing countries.



THE HIGH price of going places just keeps going up, a consequence of the dramatic rise in the demand for oil around the world.

PDI PHOTO

Perez said the recently approved Executive Order No. 336, which would increase the existing 3 percent tariff on crude and petroleum products to 5 percent, would not be implemented until international prices started to go down.

Unrelated

The recent round of price increases, he said, was totally unrelated to the recently signed executive order.

"I'd like to clarify that EO 336, which the President signed last month, has not yet been implemented given that world oil prices have continued to rise," he said. "I'd like to clarify that the recent adjustment is not a result of any increase in tariff."

He related that the Departments of Energy and of Trade and Industry and the National Economic and Development Authority were still working on the guidelines that would determine the price level at which the new EO should be implemented.

At this point, with a P200-billion budget deficit staring the government in the face, a tariff slash is not an option, he said.

Perez said a 1-percent reduction in tariff, equivalent to about 12 centavos, would result in a P2.2-billion loss in revenue for the government. *Reports from Reuters and Abigail L. Ho*

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The Reader's Digest official list of winners should all cases be conclusive. All the winners will be notified by registered mail on how to claim the prize. In case of queries, please contact us at A-Z DIRECT MARKETING INC. 723 Sgt Bumatay St. Plainview Mandaluyong City 1550

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Democrats see politics in terror alert

WASHINGTON—For Howard Dean, there is now no question about why the White House raised the terror alert across the country on Sunday.

"The administration is manipulating the release of information in order to affect the president's campaign," Dean said Tuesday, adding that the alert was issued as Sen. John Kerry took a cross-country trip celebrating his nomination. "This is a pattern that goes back to 2002 when Karl Rove wrote his well-known memo advising Republican candidates to run on terrorism."

But Kerry's advisers gave a very different, and emphatic, answer when asked if they, too, thought that a terror alert had been timed to the electoral calendar.

"The answer is no," said James P. Rubin, senior foreign policy adviser to Kerry. "This matter is too important to our safety; we have no reason to believe that this information that was most recently released was released for political reasons."

On Monday, Kerry assailed what he described as Bush's halfhearted embrace of the Sept. 11 commission's recommendations. Bush called for creation of an intelligence czar but one without the White House office or budgetary power recommended by the commission.

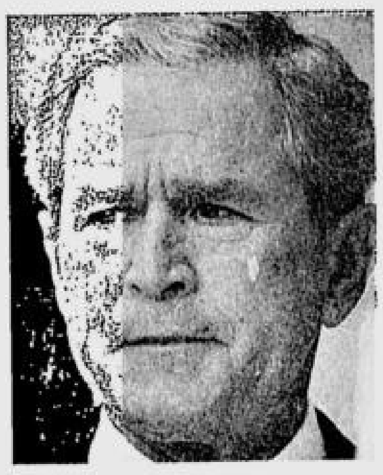
But Kerry pointedly avoided saying Bush might be playing politics with terror. Democrats said he was concerned about being seen as trying to turn a national tragedy to his political gain, particularly if a warning turned out to be true.

The advantages of incumbency were in full display Sunday, when Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge warned of possible al-Qaida terrorist attacks on financial institutions in New York City, Washington and Newark, New Jersey.

The Bush administration let a 24-hour news cycle pass before making clear that most of the intelligence, while recently obtained, was three or four years old.

"I am concerned that every time something happens that's not good for President Bush, he plays this trump card, which is terrorism," Dean said Sunday.

Similar doubts were raised privately by Kerry's advisers, top Democrats and even some Republicans who privately questioned Ridge's timing. *New York Times, AP*



BUSH

KERRY

No choice but to warn on terror, Ridge says

WASHINGTON—Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge on Tuesday defended the decision to tighten security in New York and Washington even though the intelligence behind the latest terror warnings was as much as four years old.

Law enforcement officials were trying to determine whether the plot was current, with terrorists still trying to organize such an attack—in an investigation made more urgent by revelations linking the suspect behind the intelligence with the 1998 bombings of US embassies in east Africa.

In those devastating truck bombings, al-Qaida operatives had begun casing targets in Kenya almost five years in advance.

The warnings that terrorists might be plotting attacks on financial institutions in New York, Washington and Newark, New Jersey, have prompted authorities to elevate the terror alert level in those cities to orange, or high. Streets have been closed with barricades erected and he[illegible]ed police guarding potential targets.

The intelligence behind the warnings—including detailed surveillance photos, sketches and written documents—came from sources including a seized laptop and computer discs and from interviews after the mid-July arrest of a young Pakistani computer engineer, Mohammad Naeem Noor Khan.

Federal investigators are working on the assumption that the plot is continuing, said a senior justice department official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

And top Bush administration officials said some of the surveillance was apparently updated as recently as this January, although they offered no details.

"I think you have to keep in mind al-Qaida's history of planning attacks well in advance and then updating those plans just before attacking," said White House spokesperson Scott McClellan, traveling with President George W. Bush on a trip to Texas.

Administration officials denied any suggestion that raising the terror alert right after the Democratic National Convention was politically motivated. "We don't do politics in the Department of Homeland Security," Ridge said.

He said it was essential to release the information, which had just been uncovered in Pakistan. Speaking at a news conference in New York, Ridge said that because of the heightened security steps, "we have made it much more difficult for the terrorists to achieve their broad objectives."

In addition to five buildings previously named, a senior counterterrorism official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said the information included references to the Nasdaq and American Stock Exchange buildings in New York and the Bank of America building in San Francisco. Two other facilities in New York, and undisclosed buildings in Washington and New Jersey were also mentioned.

On Sunday, when the terror alert was issued—it mentioned the Citigroup Center building and the New York Stock Exchange in New York, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank buildings in Washington and Prudential Financial Inc.'s headquarters in Newark, New Jersey—officials acknowledged that some of the information was at least several years old, some of it preceding the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The information did not include the full outline of any plot, one official said.

Many of the paper documents showing the surveillance of US buildings were undated, meaning investigators must work backward to match particular descriptions of security with known details of security at the buildings at certain points in time—to determine when the documents were created.

One link under investigation is between Khan, the source of the surveillance documents, and the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania that killed more than 200 people, said the justice department official. *AP*

American cities concerned over costs of extended alerts

IN NEW Jersey, which has suddenly found itself on a list of potential terrorism targets, police chiefs bemoaned the costs of its heightened security procedures.

In Washington, the municipal police bristled at what they called the walling-in of the nation's Capitol, and the traffic jams it caused.

And in New York City, there were questions as to whether new security measures should be kept in place even for the remainder of the month—including during the Republic National Convention.

Just two days after the new terror alerts, questions—and even resentment—arose from inside the cross hairs, and police officials coordinating stepped-up security measures were looking ahead to when it would be possible to step back down.

Sunday's announcement that al-Qaida operatives had staked out several financial centers in New York, New Jersey and Washington was somewhat tempered on Monday with the disclosure that the operatives' legwork was conducted three or four years ago. The material is believed to have been updated as recently as last January.

Tuesday, officials were grappling with the delicate question of when a threat—especially one as detailed as described Sunday—expires. Law enforcement officials in all three areas said they were negotiating the balance between protecting the public in the face of four-year-old intelligence, and allowing life to go on as usual. Some said that a threat, no matter how thin, had to be acted upon, others said they detected an overreaction, and still others said that in this era of terror threats, there really is no concrete playbook for those who are charged with protecting against an attack. *New York Times*

SO THE PUBLIC MAY FINALLY KNOW.... THE TRUTH

While I will always consider Gilbert my son, in spite of what he has said and done, allow this mother to speak on behalf of myself and my daughters so that facts may be set straight and be brought to light.

- First, it's ridiculous for my son, Gilbert, to claim that my husband and I lived with him for 20 years. Except after his operation for hydrocephalus, my husband, Francisco, has always been in control of our family and our business, and he would not agree to burden any of his children by living in their house. It is Gilbert who lives with us. Thus, while Gilbert stays with us, my husband and I have always been the ones paying for all the expenses in the house.
- As early as March of this year, my husband's neurologist, Dr. Rogelio Libarnes, has asked that my husband, Francisco, be brought to the hospital for revision of the shunt attached to his head to drain fluids from his brain. Contrary to Gilbert's claims, my husband may not be suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The sooner my husband is brought to the hospital, the sooner he will get better and be able to speak for himself.
- Moreover, I am surprised that Gilbert is saying that my husband has Alzheimer's when I have been recently informed by our Hongkong lawyer that he has received a letter supposedly coming from my husband saying that he is changing his last will and testament and that he would make Gilbert his sole authorized trustee and administrator of his property in Hongkong.
- As to the stay of my daughters in Canada, Gilbert knows very well that they only stayed there to study. It is highly egoistic for Gilbert to claim that he was partly responsible for supporting his sisters' stay in Canada. My husband and I paid for all of their expenses. It is, however, shocking for me to find my own son trying to cause the deportation of his own sisters. As identified by Gilbert, his lawyer, Atty. Alvin Ignacio, had initiated a deportation case against his sisters, Geraldine and Grace with the Bureau of Immigration. Fortunately, the Regional Trial Court (RTC) of Manila, Branch 37, has issued a writ of preliminary injunction against the Bureau of Immigration's deportation proceedings.
- I'm also shocked to hear how Gilbert claims credit for the success of Northern Islands Co., Inc. ("NICI") when there were times, in the past, when Gilbert did not want to have anything to do with NICI. He would even boast to his father how his personal business, Smartnet, was doing better than NICI, saying that he could earn in 2 years what his father earned in more than 30 years. They were not in speaking terms after that. However, now that Smartnet is not making any money and is, in fact, deep in debt, he wants to steal NICI from his family. How can Gilbert say that he was responsible for making NICI a success, when he can't even make his own business productive? It was my husband who is responsible for making what NICI is now. As admitted by Gilbert, my husband has always been the President and Chief Executive Officer of NICI until recently when he has become sick.
- Also, my other daughters have always been involved in the business. One of my daughters, Grace, for instance is and has always been an authorized signatory for our family business, actively involved in its operation and management. So is Geraldine, who has been the General Manager. Thus, it is not true that my daughters and I took over NICI, since my daughters have already been working for the company even before this dispute.
- It is also not true that my husband, Francisco, effectively sold the controlling and voting stocks of our company, NICI, to Gilbert in 1986 in recognition of his work in the company. My husband was very much in control at that time. What happened was that upon advice of our lawyers then, Sycip Salazar Law Offices, my husband and I agreed to have another company hold in trust a percentage of the shares of NICI, but we held the certificate of shares indorsed in blank, in order for us to be able to transfer the shares to our three daughters. The name of the assignee was never written on the certificates of shares because my husband and I wanted a free hand in deciding to whom we were to allocate the family's property.
- However, my husband and I became very concerned when we heard Gilbert was deep in debt and mortgaging family properties. Gilbert even delivered to me a fake transfer certificate of title (TCT) of one of our properties to cover up for his unauthorized mortgage of one of our company's properties. Unfortunately, my husband was already sick at that time. We had to ask our daughters to help protect our family's assets from further unauthorized dispositions by Gilbert. Thus, my husband and I decided to transfer and distribute the ownership of the 50% shares of stock in NICI to each of us in order for us to manage and save our family's businesses.
- Contrary to the claim of Gilbert, there was no "looting" or "embezzling" of funds of NICI by my daughters. In the case filed by Lincoln pending with RTC-Mla. Br 46, the only basis which Gilbert used as basis for the application for TRO are credit facility agreements with Banco de Oro which were entered into in the regular course of business of NICI. They were renewals of old contracts for opening of letters of credit and discounting line.
- As to the time when our daughters and lawyers from Victor L. Chan Law Office came to the aid of my husband and I, when Gilbert would not allow us to leave our house on March 3 of this year, Gilbert, himself, was present when his father told him, in front of his sisters, our lawyers and his lawyer, Atty. Alvin Ignacio, that he wanted to leave the house with me. My husband said: "I want to leave with Mama." The only reason we had to bring him back later that evening was because he could not sleep anywhere else except inside his own room. He has grown attached to all of his belongings after his operation. I agreed to bring my husband back to the house only because I wanted him to be able to rest. There were no documents supposedly signed by my husband and it is not true that we returned him because we had no use for him. In fact, I immediately returned to our house the next morning to be with my husband, but Gilbert's goons already refused to let me in. Gilbert even had my belongings thrown from the top of the gate a day or two after I kept trying to get into my house. An officer of our Village Association is a witness to this. If I knew that Gilbert would do this, then I wouldn't have agreed to have my husband go back to our house only to be detained by his own son. Days and weeks after he refused to let me in to be with my husband, I kept coming back, knocking on the gate of my own house under the scorching sun, hoping that Gilbert would come to his senses and let his own mother inside the house - the same house that I have given him. My attempts to enter the house are all on record with the police.
- On some of the cases involving our family, let the following clarifications be made:
  1. As to the case filed by Lincoln against us before RTC-Manila, entitled Lincoln vs. NICI, etal., there was an earlier finding that as a mere trustee, Lincoln, was clearly not the real party in interest and could not ask the court for any relief. This was the reason why Gilbert, through Lincoln, had former Presiding Judge Antonio Eugenio, Jr. inhibit himself from further hearing the case. The case was transferred to the sala of Judge Artemio Tipon who issued a TRO against us, but the Court of Appeals also issued a TRO restraining Judge Tipon from enforcing, maintaining or otherwise giving effect to, among others, the order of Judge Eugenio inhibiting himself. Judge has already issued an order acknowledging the TRO of the Court of Appeals;
  2. As to the our Petition for Habeas Corpus for the liberty of Francisco and to allow me to continue to live with my husband, an appeal has been filed considering that the petition was resolved without having my husband brought before the court. There is also the pending order for his hospitalization which Gilbert has continued to disobey and violate;
  3. As to the charge of falsification filed by my son Gilbert against us, the case is accurately entitled Gilbert Guy vs. Simny Guy, et al., which incidentally is a ground for me to disinherit my son for filing this malicious case.

I experienced so much pain in giving birth to my son Gilbert. Now I feel much more pain having to beg my son in public to help us be united again with my husband.

SIMNY GUY
Wife, Mother, and Current President of Northern Islands Co., Inc.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Militants free 6 truck drivers

AMMAN—Militants in Iraq freed four Jordanian and two Turkish drivers after taking them hostage to put pressure on their companies to stop working in the country, relatives and media said on Wednesday.

The four Jordanians, who were freed in the Iraqi town of Fallujah on Tuesday night, will be handed over to Jordanian diplomats in Baghdad later on Wednesday, relatives said.

"They are now staying in the home of Haji Ibrahim Mohammad in the town of Fallujah. They spent the night in his house after their release last night by their kidnappers," said Mohammad Hassan Abu Jafaar, the brother of Ahmad Hassan Abu Jafaar, one of the four drivers seized nine days ago.

Al Jazeera television reported that a militant group linked to al-Qaida ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi had released two Turkish drivers it was holding hostage because their companies had agreed to stop working in Iraq.

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In Amman, a government source confirmed the release of the four Jordanians and said local mediators were making preparations for their handover to embassy officials in Baghdad.

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A group calling itself the Death Squad of Iraqi Resistance said last Thursday it was holding the Jordanians to put pressure on their transport company to stop cooperation with US forces in Iraq. It also urged Arabs to pressure on governments to end support for the US-led forces.

The kidnappers were reported to have been pleased by a sit-in organized by the relatives urging pro-US ally Jordan to end support for the US military campaign in Iraq and praising anti-American insurgents.

Relatives said the kidnappers had decided to free the four after establishing they had not been carrying goods for US troops.

The men were taken hostage last week after their convoy was ambushed near Fallujah a hotbed of resistance to coalition forces. They were carrying shoes and knitting machines imported by an Iraqi firm from the United Arab Emirates.

The two Turkish drivers, Abdulrahman Demir and Said Unurlu, had been threatened with beheading if their employer refused to meet the kidnappers' demands.

On Sunday, the haulage firms Kahramanli and Oztur, which employed the men, said they were prepared to suspend operations in Iraq to secure their release.

Militants in Iraq have waged a campaign of kidnapping aimed at driving out companies and troops supporting US forces and the new Iraqi interim administration.

Scores of hostages have been kidnapped by armed groups in Iraq. Some have been freed, but nine, including at least one Turk, have been killed by Tawhid and Jihad and other groups. *Reuters*

SEAN Yun, a US Swat Team Park Police officer, stands guard outside the Statue of Liberty on New York's Liberty Island, Aug. 3, the first day since Sept. 11, 2001 that tourists are allowed inside the statue. AP

Statue of Liberty reopens for first time since 9/11

NEW YORK—The Statue of Liberty, hailed once again as "a beacon of hope," welcomed tourists inside for the first time since the Sept. 11 attacks, with hundreds of visitors returning despite warnings of terrorist threats.

In an hour-long reopening ceremony Tuesday, Mayor Michael Bloomberg urged Americans to visit the statue and demonstrate that the country would never be "coerced into abandoning any symbol of America."

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"It's pretty awesome. It's a privilege to be here," said Dennis Wallace of Sheldon, Iowa, who drove 21 hours with his girlfriend and five children to visit the statue. "The announcement of the orange alert will not stop us.

Visitors found tightened security measures at the 117-year-old national monument, including a new anti-bomb detection device that blasts air into clothing and then checks for particles of explosive residue.

Tourists now can go only as high as the statue's feet, where they can gaze up through a glass partition at the steel girders bracing the landmark's hollow interior. That was good enough for two of the first guests allowed in, Eddie Nataska, 12, of Waldorf, Maryland, and his grandfather, Ralph.

"It made me feel more American because I understood why the Statue of Liberty is here," Eddie said after touring the statue. "She lights the way for America."

The reopening of the pedestal to the public went ahead despite new warnings over the weekend of possible terrorist attacks on financial centers in Manhattan, Newark, New Jersey, and Washington.

"I'm not afraid," said Lt. Dario Coleanni, 26, an Italian army officer. He and a friend said they paid a scalper $20 a pop for the normally free tickets to get inside.

"It's my first time in the US," he explained. "I'm interested in seeing what's important in America: the Statue of Liberty."

The 46-meter robed female figure with spiky crown and upraised torch has stood as the most familiar symbol of America since its arrival in New York Harbor, welcoming millions of immigrants at nearby Ellis Island.

The statue and Liberty Island were closed after Sept. 11; although the island reopened to the public two months later, the statue remained off-limits.

At the reopening ceremony, Bloomberg was joined by Gov. George Pataki, Interior Secretary Gale Norton and CNN anchor Aaron Brown.

"This beacon of hope and liberty is once again open to the public, sending a reassuring message to the world that freedom is alive in New York and shining brighter than ever before," Pataki said.

The ceremony began with a military choir performing before a color guard carried the American flag to the podium. Musical performances included a rendition of George M. Cohan's "It's a Grand Old Flag" before the crowd rose for the national anthem. *AP*

Pakistan nabs 2 top al-Qaida operatives

ISLAMABAD—A breathtaking sweep against al-Qaida's vast web of operatives widened Tuesday, with Pakistan announcing the arrests of two "high-level" al-Qaida terrorists, including one with a multimillion-dollar US bounty on his head.

In all, at least six suspects were taken into custody, among them a policeman accused of passing information to militants, a Syrian nabbed at a bus stop, and a man arrested trying to leave the country with suspicious documents, officials said.

Interior Minister Faisal Saleh Hayyat said the arrests of two men of African origin in eastern Punjab province constituted a major break, just days after intelligence agents swooped down on Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a Tanzanian wanted for the 1998 bombings of US embassies in East Africa.

"In addition to Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, whose bounty was $25 million, we have captured another most wanted suspect with a bounty on him running into the millions of dollars," Hayyat told a press conference in the capital. He said both men were of African origin but refused to name them.

Four Egyptians and a Libyan on the FBI's list of 22 most wanted terrorists are believed to be in Pakistan or Afghanistan, but it is not clear if they were among those captured. Each of the men has a $5-million bounty on his head in connection with the embassy bombings. There are also two Kenyan's on the list, though they were not believed to be hiding in the region.

Osama bin Laden's No. 2, Ayman al-Zawahri, is also from Egypt. The two men are believed hiding along the Pakistan-Afghan border, far from Punjab province.

The arrests have come with stunning swiftness since the capture in Karachi on July 13 of an al-Qaida computer expert identified as Mohammad Naeem Noor Khan, who was allegedly sending coded e-mails to other operatives. An intelligence official said Khan led authorities to Ghailani, who was captured after a 12-hour gun battle in the eastern city of Gujrat.

Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said Monday that Ghailani's computers at home contained e-mails with instructions for attacks in the United States and Britain.

Intelligence gained from Khan's and other arrests was a major factor in US Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge's decision to issue a warning Sunday about a possible al-Qaida attack on prominent financial institutions in New York, Washington and Newark, New Jersey.

Meanwhile, the police chief who led the raid that netted Ghailani told The Associated Press he received several threatening calls on his cell phone warning him in English and Urdu not to take action against the al-Qaida suspect—even as his men were storming the building.

"They said 'The people inside the house are serving Islam and any harm to them will be dangerous for you,'" police chief Raja Munawar Hussain said the caller warned. "They were highly organized terrorists. They were so well informed that they remained in touch with their men (on the outside) during the raid."

Hussain said Ghailani originally identified himself as Tanveer and claimed to be a Pakistani citizen. He said police had also taken into custody a Pakistani who acted as a front man for Ghailani, leasing a car and opening a bank account for him.

Hayyat's announcement followed news that at least six al-Qaida suspects have been arrested in separate raids in recent days.

Finally, details emerged Tuesday about the hunt that led authorities to Ghailani, the suspect in the US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania that killed more than 200 people—including 12 Americans.

Ghailani arrived in Pakistan on a Kenyan Airlines flight to Karachi on Aug. 6, 1998, a day before the attacks. He was a ghost until his arrest nearly six years later, apparently as he planned to flee the country. *AP*

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Massive floods in Asia blamed on freak weather conditions

GENEVA—Freak weather conditions have led since June to widespread flooding in much of East and South Asia, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reported Tuesday.

"The floods and and the associated mountain torrents, landslides and mudrock flows caused loss of life, destroyed houses, roads, railways and farmlands," the WMO, a United Nations specialized agency, said in a statement.

Among the countries worst hit are Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, both Koreas, Nepal, the Philippines and Vietnam.

"The intensification of the Bai-u front (which brings seasonal heavy rain to southern Japan and parts of China) in June and July, the Indian monsoon and the tropical cyclones in the southwest Pacific were the cause of the heavy rains and floods," the statement said.

"Continued heavy rain and floods are expected in some countries into August."

Each of these weather conditions is abnormal, the WMO continued, "but with the combination of monsoonal rains, the intensity of the Bai-u front and tropical cyclones, the abnormalities have resulted in disasters."

Two-thirds of Bangladesh was swamped at the height of the floods and its capital Dhaka remains under threat. Nearly 600 people have died and 30 million have been left marooned or homeless.

In India 770 have died, 700,000 houses have been damaged and 33 million people affected, according to WMO figures. *AFP*

Paraguay supermart owner charged

ASUNCION—Authorities filed manslaughter charges against an owner of a Paraguayan supermarket and five others for a massive fire in the store that killed at least 464 people, local media reported.

The indictments in Paraguay's worst disaster in decades came after investigators said a security guard told them that when Sunday's fire broke out, the doors were ordered locked to prevent looting.

Juan Pio Paiva, the store's co-owner along with his son, denied that the doors had been deliberately locked and said the building met safety codes.

Channel 13 television reported Tuesday that Judge Pedro Dario Portillo had charged Paiva with involuntary manslaughter and ordered him imprisoned while the investigation moved forward. The station also said that a business associate of Paiva and four security guards had been charged, but that Paiva's son Victor Daniel still awaited a decision by the court.

Judicial officials had no immediate comment. President Nicanor Duarte has called for a swift and thorough investigation into Sunday's tragedy.

Paiva was moved to the Tacumbu penitentiary just west of Asuncion, the capital.

"My conscience is clear," he shouted as he was hustled into the penitentiary vehemently professing his innocence. Soon after the fire he denied claims that the supermarket doors had been ordered locked during Sunday's blaze.

Earlier Tuesday, the death toll soared as the attorney general's office said 464 had been killed, up from the 325 reported earlier. Officials also said 409 people remained hospitalized.

Dozens of families were still searching for lost loved ones as investigators questioned the store's two owners, a manager and four security guards over whether the doors had been ordered locked to stop people from leaving without paying—allegedly trapping shoppers inside.

The blaze broke out during lunch hour at the three-story supermarket in a suburb of Asuncion. Flames quickly spread through the Ycua Bolanos supermarket, food court and parking garage. Officials said they were checking reports an exploding gas canister could have started the flames that forced one floor to collapse, crushing cars and burning many bodies beyond recognition. *AP*

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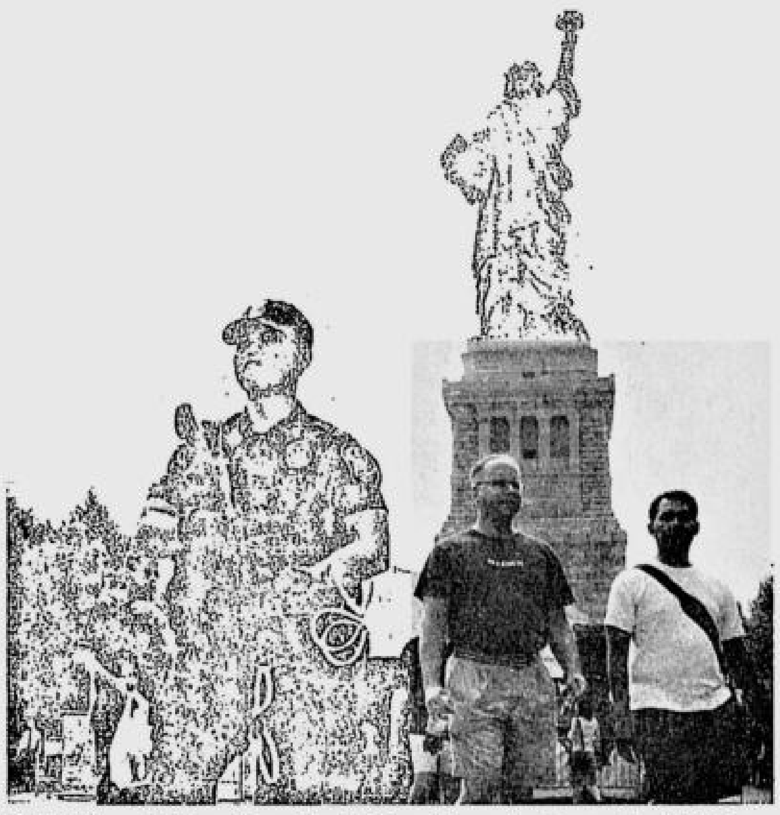

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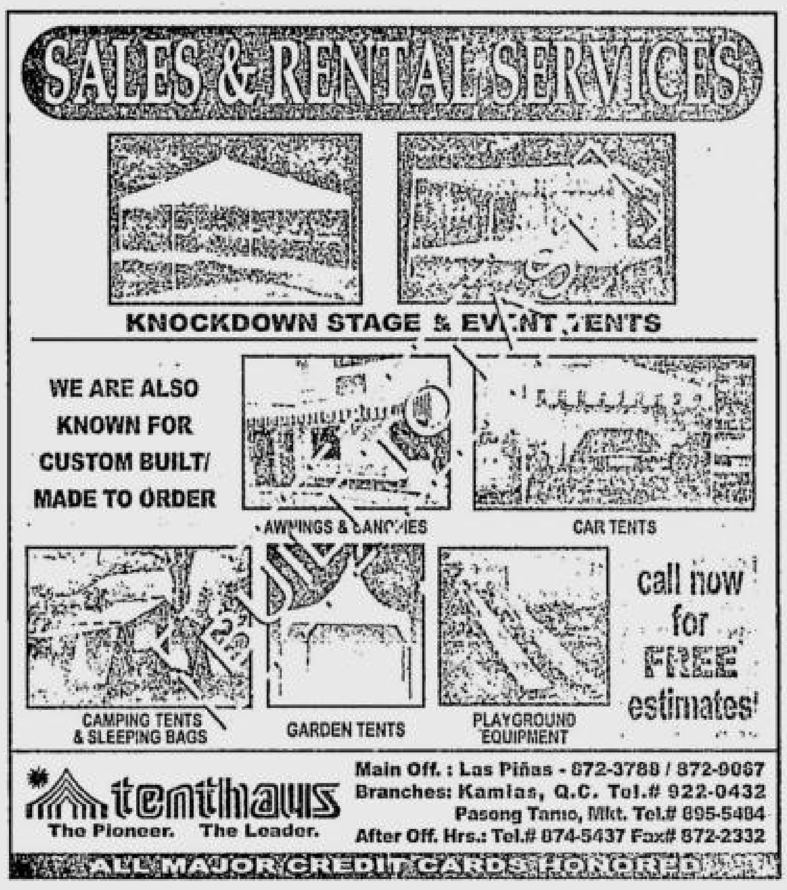
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ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS HONORED

Massive floods in Asia blamed on freak weather conditions

GENEVA—Freak weather conditions have led since June to widespread flooding in much of East and South Asia, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reported Tuesday.

"The floods and and the associated mountain torrents, landslides and mudrock flows caused loss of life, destroyed houses, roads, railways and farmlands," the WMO, a United Nations specialized agency, said in a statement.

Among the countries worst hit are Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, both Koreas, Nepal, the Philippines and Vietnam.

"The intensification of the Bai-u front (which brings seasonal heavy rain to southern Japan and parts of China) in June and July, the Indian monsoon and the tropical cyclones in the southwest Pacific were the cause of the heavy rains and floods," the statement said.

"Continued heavy rain and floods are expected in some countries into August."

Each of these weather conditions is abnormal, the WMO continued, "but with the combination of monsoonal rains, the intensity of the Bai-u front and tropical cyclones, the abnormalities have resulted in disasters."

Two-thirds of Bangladesh was swamped at the height of the floods and its capital Dhaka remains under threat. Nearly 600 people have died and 30 million have been left marooned or homeless.

In India 770 have died, 700,000 houses have been damaged and 33 million people affected, according to WMO figures. *AFP*

Paraguay supermart owner charged

ASUNCION—Authorities filed manslaughter charges against an owner of a Paraguayan supermarket and five others for a massive fire in the store that killed at least 464 people, local media reported.

The indictments in Paraguay's worst disaster in decades came after investigators said a security guard told them that when Sunday's fire broke out, the doors were ordered locked to prevent looting.

Juan Pio Paiva, the store's co-owner along with his son, denied that the doors had been deliberately locked and said the building met safety codes.

Channel 13 television reported Tuesday that Judge Pedro Dario Portillo had charged Paiva with involuntary manslaughter and ordered him imprisoned while the investigation moved forward. The station also said that a business associate of Paiva and four security guards had been charged, but that Paiva's son Victor Daniel still awaited a decision by the court.

Judicial officials had no immediate comment. President Nicanor Duarte has called for a swift and thorough investigation into Sunday's tragedy.

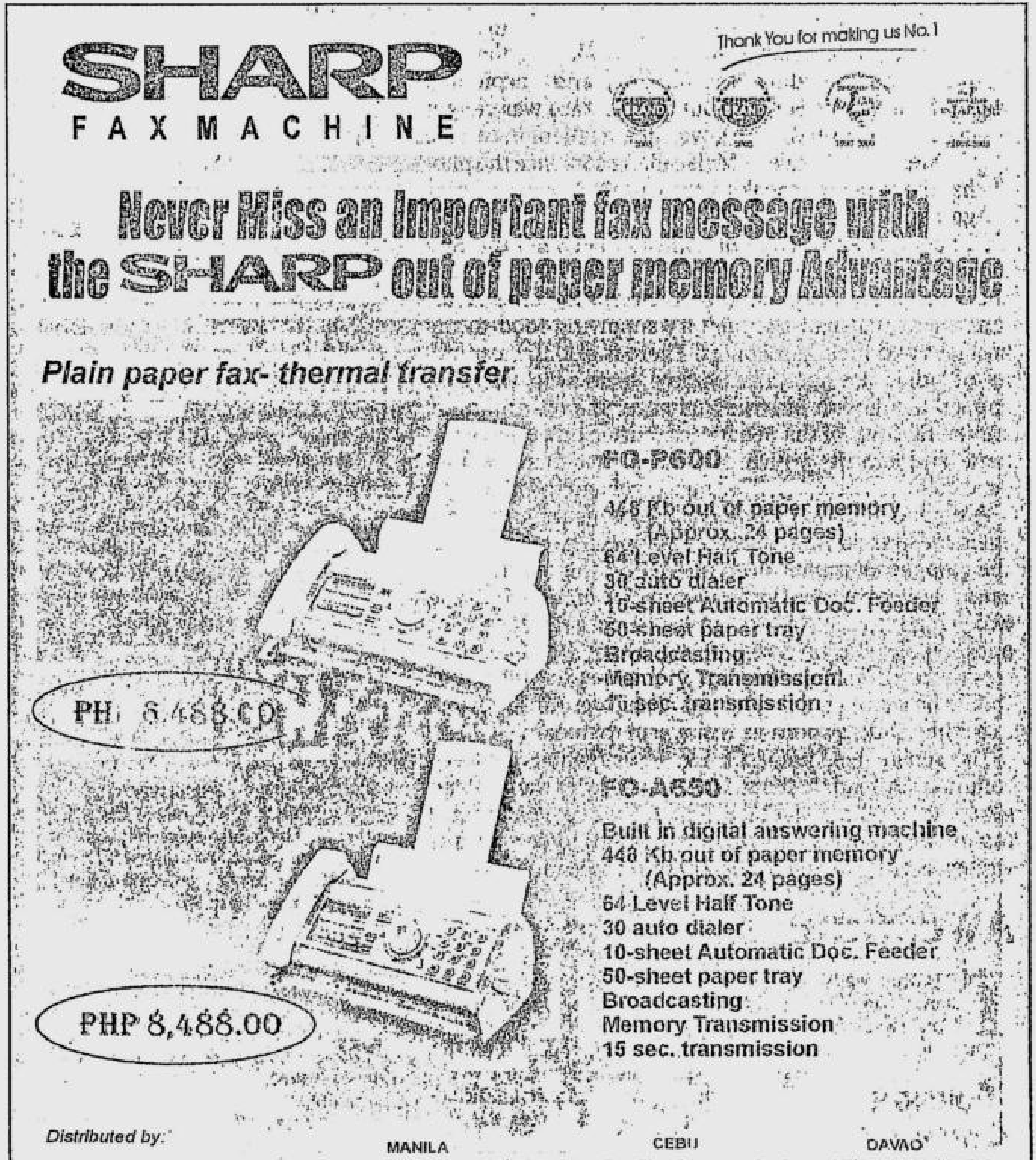
Paiva was moved to the Tacumbu penitentiary just west of Asuncion, the capital.

"My conscience is clear," he shouted as he was hustled into the penitentiary vehemently professing his innocence. Soon after the fire he denied claims that the supermarket doors had been ordered locked during Sunday's blaze.

Earlier Tuesday, the death toll soared as the attorney general's office said 464 had been killed, up from the 325 reported earlier. Officials also said 409 people remained hospitalized.

Dozens of families were still searching for lost loved ones as investigators questioned the store's two owners, a manager and four security guards over whether the doors had been ordered locked to stop people from leaving without paying—allegedly trapping shoppers inside.

The blaze broke out during lunch hour at the three-story supermarket in a suburb of Asuncion. Flames quickly spread through the Ycua Bolanos supermarket, food court and parking garage. Officials said they were checking reports an exploding gas canister could have started the flames that forced one floor to collapse, crushing cars and burning many bodies beyond recognition. *AP*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Rush to whitewash

EDITORIAL

IF there were a reversal of roles, government prosecutors would make very poor witnesses. On Thursday last week, state prosecutor Nestor Lazaro quoted former Abu Sayyaf hostage Gracia Burnham as saying there was no collusion between the bandit group and the military. He went on to explain that Burnham merely heard what she had written in her book about alleged negotiations between Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Sabaya and a military general regarding how the ransom money was to be divided.

Senior state prosecutor Leo Dacera said Burnham's written account was just her "general impressions." But now her sworn statement "should put everything—the matter, all doubts—to rest," he added. Acting Secretary Merceditas Gutierrez said Burnham's testimony, "given under oath and in open court, should clarify any misunderstanding that her book might have created."

Maybe. But then Burnham said no such thing. A video recording and a voice tape of the court proceedings showed she couldn't put in a reply after a defense lawyer asked if she thought there was "connivance" between the military and the Abu Sayyaf. Three government prosecutors made sure of that by jumping to their feet to raise objections, which the judge immediately sustained.

But Lazaro was certain he heard Burnham clear the military officers, saying she answered the question before the judge could rule on the prosecutors' objections. Was this an honest mistake? To believe that, one also must believe that Lazaro's memory failed him as soon as he left the courtroom.

Chief state prosecutor Jovencito Zuño has a different recollection of how Burnham came to make the statement. He said that it was while she was being prepared for her testimony that she admitted that she had no personal knowledge of the alleged collusion. "There was no direct testimony from Gracia Burnham that there was no collusion," Zuño admitted. "But just the same, there was no categorical statement that there was collusion."

Zuño was talking in riddles but he left little doubt about what he wanted the public to believe: that indeed Burnham had cleared the military. He had to, especially since even President Macapagal-Arroyo had already thanked Burnham for upholding "the integrity and uncommon valor of our Armed Forces." But after Lazaro was caught telling a lie and everyone in government fell for it, can the Department and Justice or Malacañang convince the public that they are now speaking the truth?

Against the prosecutors' word that Burnham had denied personal knowledge of collusion between the Abu Sayyaf and the military, there is her written account about the alleged negotiations, as well as the unusual arrangement that had the military supplying food to the hostages and their kidnappers. There is also the testimony of other hostages like Buddy Recio who was kidnapped along with his wife and sister-in-law. And there are the findings of the Senate committee on national defense and security which concluded that there was indeed collusion between the Abu Sayyaf and the military.

Pasig Judge Lorifel Pahinma, who is hearing the case against captured Abu Sayyaf kidnappers, explained that she stopped Burnham from answering the question because the way it was phrased "calls for an opinion" and was irrelevant. She is wrong about its relevance. The question of collusion is central to the case. If military officers were in cahoots with the Abu Sayyaf, then they should be among the defendants. They were an accessory to a crime and, in addition, disloyal to their oath.

The Senate need not reopen its investigation of alleged collusion. Instead, it should investigate why the AFP has sat on its recommendation calling for the court martial of top military officers and why there seems to be a rush to whitewash the case on the part of the prosecution service.

Awesome

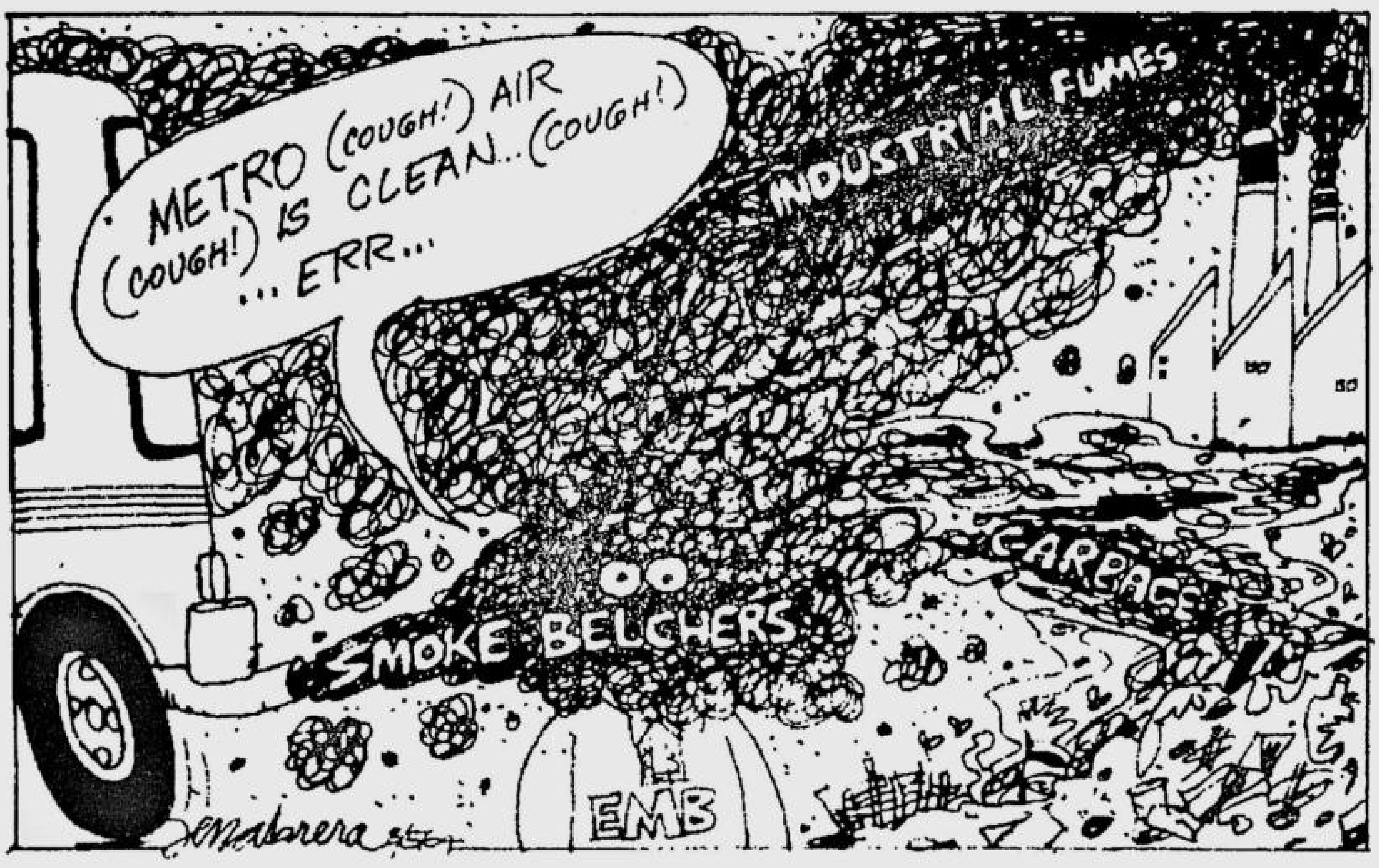
FOREIGN COMMENT

TO USE an overworked phrase but one that is truly apt in this instance, Lance Armstrong's sixth straight victory in the Tour de France was totally awesome.

The Tour is an annual curiosity here, but in Europe it is an epic sporting event, 2,100 miles over three weeks over France's incredibly varied terrain, including two formidable mountain ranges, the Alps and Pyrenees. And it has been run for 101 years.

Only four other riders, all legends, have won it five times. Not only is Armstrong an American, where cycling is a fringe sport, but he is a cancer survivor and, at 32, the oldest Tour winner.

News Chief (Winter Haven, Florida)



Whistle-blowers

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE LITMUS test to determine if governments tackle graft seriously is how well they protect "whistle-blowers."

"Governments must create an environment that encourages, instead of penalizing, citizens who denounce venality," declared 135 countries—the Philippines included—at the 9th International Anti-Corruption Conference in Durham, South Africa.

Recent high-profile cases abroad illustrate how whistle-blowers curb corporate crimes or government blunders.

Enron's multibillion-dollar accounting pyramids were blown up by a letter from employee Sherron Watkins. Agent Cynthia Cooper ripped apart the FBI's lapse in ignoring tips about a 9/11 plotter in Florida. And Daniel Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers, leading to the reexamination of the Vietnam war.

These happen when whistle-blowers have institutional protection against retaliation. Thus, South Africa has a Protected Disclosure Law. The US Labor Department safeguards, by federal law, those who expose malfeasance. Individual states like Illinois have "whistle-blower" ordinances.

How about us? Acsa Ramirez whipped out a whistle on a tax scam at Land Bank. Instead of being protected, Ramirez found herself presented as one of the crooks, by President Macapagal-Arroyo, no less, and by the inept National Bureau of Investigation agents.

Angry sustained protests—some from this paper—erupted over this gross injustice. Government grudgingly backtracked. Loss of face was deemed more important than fairness. This squelches future "whistle-blowers."

Here, protection for those who oppose venality is sporadic. Cebu City's General Services Office chief Rolando Ardosa refused to accept questionable dump trucks, bought by Mayor Tomas Osmeña's administration for P19.7 million. City officials let Ardosa twist in the wind when Pasajero Motors Corp. (Pasamor) sued, claiming delays.

It was Regional Deputy Ombudsman Primo Miro who gave substance to the Durham Statement. He scrapped the suit, noting his office earlier approved graft investigator Gaudencio Melendez's findings: that three of the six "brand new" trucks were allegedly reconditioned vehicles—fitted with old, modified and fabricated parts "whose workmanship is below standard."

Pasamor trucks were, in fact, "being investigated by this office in a separate docket," the Ombudsman wrote. "It was prudent for Ardosa to defer signing the acceptance of the dump trucks until the whole matter was clarified."

Suppose the Ombudsman's ongoing probe backfires on Cebu. City Hall didn't wait to find out. Pasamor executive Franklin Ong, however, is Mayor Osmeña's avid fan. Department of Engineering and Public Works' Jerome Ang accepted his dump trucks, "despite the absence of Ardosa's signature."

"Every failure to recover proceeds of corruption," the Durham Statement warns, "feeds its growth." And our record of "whistle-blowing" incidents is mixed.

Remember Rear Adm. Guillermo Wong? This ramrod-straight Philippine Military Academy graduate wrote a thesis on "Norms of Honor." It was a study on the standards of ethical conduct by Philippine Navy officers.

Wong used those standards in denouncing Marine purchases of thin Kevlar helmets and malfunctioning HK-MP5 assault rifles. Only the amount of P266 was left from a P64.9 million allocation for a Marine base. But roads, sewage and electrical systems, etc. were non existent.

The admiral, his critics sneered in retaliation, was a "compulsive whiner," even as a cadet. He often "did the right things the Wong way." The brass shoved Wong into "floating status." That's an office table with a solitary telephone connected to nowhere. The Navy's Office of Ethical Standards, nonetheless, admitted "a prima facie case existed" on the worthless tin helmets, missing machine guns and Marine base funds.

In this country, those who horsewhip money changers out of the temple end up excoriated. There are exceptions. People Power II backed Equitable's Clarissa Ocampo's exposé on then President Joseph Estrada's signing as Jose Velarde.

At the same trial, secretary Emma Lim exposed "Jingle Bells" for massive *jueteng* payoffs and the shell Muslim Youth Foundation.

Alert auditors are effective "whistle-blowers." The Commission on Audit's Helen Hilayo revealed that Mayor Osmeña's yen loans, in City Halls books, were "understated"—a polite word for "doctored"—by a whooping P1,713,999,988. That's almost two-thirds of the city's annual budget.

To be a watchdog for the public, the press is given flak jackets by the Constitution. Some of us do the job well. Others play lapdogs for the powerful.

"The press is a frail vessel for the hopes it is meant to bear," London Times editor Harry Evans wrote. "The best it can do is never enough to illuminate the invisible environment, the complexity of forces that we cannot monitor for ourselves but affect our lives."

Providing legal bulwarks and incentives for whistle-blowers is a task our new Congress could usefully take on. "Corruption bears with special cruelty on the poor," the Durham Statement asserts. "It destroys confidence in democracy and the legitimacy of government."

* * *

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Under the knife

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MY thanks to those who have texted and sent e-mails expressing sympathy and goodwill. Recovering from an operation may be the next best thing to attending your own funeral: You get to hear all those nice things said about you.

Until last week, I knew next to nothing about gall bladders, nor was I greatly interested in them. I could imagine a number of things waylaying me health-wise, but none of them included gallstones. That really came at me like a bolt from the blue, or from way off-field. I've since heard stories from sufferers how they bore the pain for years before finally agreeing to an operation. I experienced nothing of the sort. I never had that kind of pain before, or the presentiment of one. Now and then, I'd feel a case of indigestion, or even bloating—who wouldn't when you've plied yourself inordinately with Hans' favorite brew? (Hospitalization made me rediscover crossword puzzles—but not much else.)

The one time it happened, it went all the way—to the operating table. And in record time, from mild oppression to absolute agony in three days. Well, I've always been known to be in such a rush. Except in the important things, like making whoopee.

Thankfully, the experience hasn't just been unnerving, it has also been edifying. You do get to learn things amid trying circumstances, or precisely because of them. One of those things I noted already last Monday. Being laid low helps you put yourself in another person's shoes, particularly those who have been stricken in a tragic way, if only fleetingly.

I do not mean to trivialize the plight of paraplegics by comparing it to the sensation, or utter lack of it, of being blanketed by anesthesia. I just mean to suggest that it gives you a glimpse into the horror of it. Putting yourself in another person's shoes, of course, is the worst metaphor for it. It is a terrifying feeling not to be able to feel anything other than your head. I tried to raise a foot, and felt nothing. I tried to raise a hand and felt nothing. It wasn't just that my brain had no control over any part of my body, it was that it led nowhere, like the frayed ends of an electric cord. There was just a "Void" where my body used to be.

But at least, even at the pit of my panic, something told me at the back of my head this was temporary, I was going to come out of it. Imagine falling asleep each night and knowing you'll wake up next day feeling exactly the same way. Which is not feeling anything at all. Dante could not have painted a blacker picture of torment. It's enough to make you discover the virtue of compassion.

Well before I found myself in that state, I was already learning lessons in humility. I've never been fond of hospitals. Until last week, I hadn't been hospitalized for any reason. Certainly, I hadn't been cut up. On many occasions before, when I went to hospitals to visit friends and relatives, I'd see people being wheeled into the elevator I was taking. The elevators of hospitals are huge and are designed precisely for people to be wheeled in, on wheelchairs or beds, with IV bottles dangling over them. On those occasions, I would notice that none of the other passengers, except kids, would really look at the patients. I would be one of them. It wasn't just that it was impolite to stare—only kids see emperors without their clothes—it was that no one wanted to stare at his or her future.

I remember that Albert Camus once said it was the hardest thing to look at the bloodstained face of humanity. It's not hard to see why. We want to keep suffering at arm's length. We want to think the bloodstained face will always belong to somebody else, not to us. You look at it squarely and you know you are looking at a mirror.

Well, each time I got wheeled into the elevator, I had an acute sense of everything having been reversed. I was no longer up there, studiously avoiding looking down. I was down here, studiously looking up at the faces that were studiously not looking down. Or such as I could look up while my rib cage rattled each time I sucked in breath. It wasn't that the eyes above me held fear and pity, it was that they held nothing, only a distance, only a remoteness, only an impregnable untouchableness.

Thankfully, I found little room for self-pity. It wasn't just that acute pain tends to crowd out everything, it was also that while being wheeled down the corridors, I saw things that blotted out self-pity. I saw signs like, "bone marrow transplant," "cardiovascular diseases" and "emergency unit." None of these trivializes pain, but they put it in radical perspective. Despite the tremors rippling from the pit of my stomach, I felt awed by the enormity of other people's suffering, I felt crushed by the boundlessness of other people's sorrow. Can you imagine a child who has to undergo a bone marrow transplant, a man who has to have a triple bypass operation, a woman who is bleeding on a cot at the emergency ward?

You compare yourself to someone who is healthier or richer or more talented, you will be envious. You compare yourself to someone whom life has treated shabbily, you will feel blessed:

There is one last thing I learned, which came from the suddenness and unexpectedness of my affliction. Which is that life is full of surprises. You never really know what tomorrow will bring however carefully you plan out your life (which I don't) or however prepared you are for the unusual and bizarre (which I am). Life has a way of thwarting smugness.

I have not learned from this a reason to live in fear and trembling. I have learned from it a reason to live in awe and wonder. I have not found in this a reason to believe in the fickleness of every passing moment.

I have found in it a reason to believe in its utter preciousness.

Great news for lowly coconut

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A RECENT small item in the Manila Standard may have escaped notice, but it's highly significant. It said the police have arrested four of the 10 members of a pyramiding scam syndicate believed to have victimized at least 2,000 individuals of billions of pesos. Arrested were recruiters of CITP New Century International and police said their victims were mostly overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East, Hong Kong and the United States, who were enticed to invest more than $26 million, or P1.456 billion, in the firm.

This news item merely reinforces common belief that lots of money attract all manner of syndicates; but what's also obvious is that our OFWs, for lack of investment savvy, easily fall prey to all kinds of scams, as investments analyst Francisco Colayco noted in the recent dzRH program that Cecile Alvarez and I co-host. Thus, while many OFWs wish to increase the value of their earnings, all too often, Colayco pointed out, most of them end up poorer than when they left the country, thanks to scams.

* * *

Our OFWs' earnings are truly blood money, but they can be a gold mine for investments. The OFWs number about seven million abroad and still growing. Their remittances prop up the economy, but sadly they remain largely unprotected by the government, especially in the aspect that concerns investments of their earnings. The first step is to protect the OFWs from the scam operators and illegal recruiters who, judging from the latter's continuing nefarious operations, seem to have no fear of the law. As I said earlier, government should expand the role of the office of presidential adviser on OFWs to cover a program for their investments. Merging that office with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, however, may not do the trick.

* * *

On the coconut front, there's more good news to add to the earlier report of former Ambassador Jose Romero, who interviewed Dr. Harry Preuss, head of the physiology and biophysics department of Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, D.C. The Preuss team has been doing progressive research on the positive role of an element in the lowly coconut, called monolaurin, in the fight against bacterial infections. I opined that this augurs well for the millions of Filipino coconut farmers and their families, many of whom have remained sadly mired in poverty, partly owing to their exploitation by unscrupulous industry leaders in past decades. That story triggered a response from Dr. Vermen Verallo-Rowell, chair of the Makati Medical Center's department of dermatology, who told us of the research and use of this element in the coconut by MMC and the Skin and Cancer Foundation (SCF), which "are probably even more advanced than Georgetown's." Wow!

* * *

Dr. Rowell said she first heard about monolaurin at a dermatology meeting in Beijing in 1998 from Dr. Jon Kabara and that she felt "so unschooled about our very own coconut's wonders." But the good thing is that it sparked her "now continuing and consuming interest in the coconut for medical uses." Today five randomized clinical trials are being conducted at MMC and SCF, while the nursery at MMC's pediatrics department will soon submit to the Institutional Review Board a monolaurin protocol that, if approved, should start within another month.

Rowell's studies on the coconut were published in two peer-reviewed professional journals, with another study on virgin coconut oil slated to come out next month in the US Journal of Contact Dermatitis. In addition, she's about to finish a book entirely about coconut products: both the medicinal uses of coconut oil and its nutritional uses—"great for your skin and as a salad dressing." She began it last year with Kabara and Dr. Conrado Dayrit as her principal consultants. She promises that the book will be in a style "simple, easy to understand, laced with humor, and which makes comparisons to ordinary things," so the reader can better appreciate the "technical stuff." Her manuscript will be sent to her US editor soon, to be published abroad for a wider audience.

As to my suggestion that the Department of Health ought to be alert to the fantastic developments on monolaurin, Rowell assures the people that the medical profession here is "well-attuned to the coconut and its many medical possibilities." As a matter of "historical fact," she said, her research has revealed that lauric acid-rich coconut oil has been used for skin care and as an antiseptic in our barrios for centuries!

* * *

New Batangas representative and former three-term governor Hermilando Mandanas has described the two-child policy proposed by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman "unconstitutional," and that "it violates every Filipino's basic human right." Mandanas was quoted as saying that while overpopulation "must not be taken for granted," any attempt to address this issue at the expense of the sanctity of the Filipino family and the right to life of unborn children is "abominable." Warning that "no one has the right to play God," the lawmaker said he will oppose the bill at every stage of the legislative process.

I suspect that in using the population issue as the whipping boy for all our economic ills, our lawmakers may in reality be resorting to a copout. For instead of concentrating on how to move the economy and attract more investments here, they keep blaming population growth. South Korea used to worry about its increasing population in the '70s; but instead of wringing their hands, the Koreans put their best minds together and worked out an economic miracle in Asia, second only to Japan's. The overpopulation problem disappeared, as many couples became busy with two jobs or in whipping up export productions.

Mody with the smiling soul

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

SHE did not paint with her mouth, or strum the guitar with her feet. She did not write verses or propound mathematical theories. She was no savant, but she was no sorry saint either. She had no spectacular talent or stunning achievements to speak of that could make her a celebrity worth all the fuss.

What she had were syringomyelia—and her immense capacity to take in life and be joyful. And to infect others with her *joie de vivre*. And to draw people to herself. And to be drawn to others.

Her story is worth retelling, my former editor at the Sunday Inquirer Magazine said to me the other day. I told her that Cecilia "Mody" Chuidian Jurado, whom I had written about in 1991, passed away last Tuesday morning after a bout with respiratory illness. Mody's body was cremated immediately. She was 46. (Nightly Masses at 25 Humabon St., Magallanes Village, Makati, Tel. No. 852-5850.)

Mody had been bedridden, wheelchair-bound for 37 years. Only her head could move normally. And except for her upper limbs that could make slight, difficult movements, the rest of her was practically immobile. Mody was a quadriplegic. What Mody could not do for herself, others had to do for her.

Mody had been that way since she was 9 years old. She was stricken with syringomyelia at that age when girls romped about and beat boys their age at their own game. One day, all that energy came to a sudden stop. After four months in the hospital, Mody was brought home, never to move freely again and to start life anew.

Syringomyelia is a blister in the spinal cord that results in a chronic and progressive condition associated with sensory disturbances, muscle atrophy and spasticity.

The Jurado home in Magallanes Village had to undergo renovation so that Mody's room on the ground floor could have a good view of everything that went on. Mody continued her studies at St. Scholastica's College through a home study program and she finished grade school and high school. She could have earned a college diploma but the education department at that time had requirements that a quadriplegic could not fulfill. Mody's mentors encouraged her to keep on learning on her own. Mody read and listened to tapes and opened herself to the world.

Mody was the third of the five children of retired Air Force General Augusto Jurado and Nena Chuidian. She had two older half-sisters—her father's children by his first wife—who were killed by the Japanese during World War II.

"Mama said I'm helping God carry the cross," Mody stated without a tinge of religious sentimentality. She was completely given to her condition. When I asked her what she would have wanted to do with her life had she been mobile, she said, "A doctor in the missions."

Mody's aunt, Sr. Consuelo Chuidian, a Good Shepherd nun, was one of the human rights workers who perished in a sea mishap off Mindanao in 1984. Her aunt's photo hung beside Mody's bed.

Mody was a study in wholeness and oneness with the world. The fact that she was no celebrity made those qualities shine through. She was no saint, no heroine, she would laugh. She was like most everyone—ordinary. Could that have been the reason many people were drawn to her?

People would come to her with their problems. She listened, gave counsel. Her smooth voice and good diction were some of her worldly assets. She had a keen sense of humor, was even self-deprecating at times, not hiding the weaker side of her. She could be lazy, she would say.

Mody could run the house even from her bed. She supervised the househelp, planned the marketing and the menu. She taught the househelp how to cook. "*Utos lang ng utos*," she chuckled. She also liked going to the mall and, when she was younger, to pop concerts with her friends.

Mody could use computer and do e-mail with one slightly moving finger. A cordless phone was always with her. That Mody's spastic hands could move at all was due to physical therapy. She could write, even do cross stitch ever so slowly. There was sensation in her entire body but she could not move. Someone had to brush her teeth and clean her up.

In 1991, Mody had breast cancer and underwent radical mastectomy and chemotherapy. She didn't bother to wear a wig when her hair fell off. Mody survived cancer.

Friends who came to visit Mody all these years were not visiting a sick person. Her best friend and neighbor Florian Nuval-Nequinto would come around often for a chat, taking along her baby to roll on and wet Mody's bed. The two were best friends since they were kids.

Her father (who died a few years ago) said they made sure Mody did not turn out spoiled. "If we gave in to her every whim," her mother said, "she could have ended miserable." She thought Mody was really very special. "I think the word for her is valiant."

Mody was never sore at anyone, God included, for her condition and the finality of it. "I didn't think it was going to be temporary," she said then. "You take what God gives you, do the best you can, be happy. I think I live a pretty good life. I am relatively healthy, I have lots of friends. I have a nice family. I get sad but not depressed." Sad about what? "Seeing other people's hardships, their poverty, their suffering—physical, mental.

"We have to make the most out of life, be the best. Don't worry. This does not mean we should not plan. But we have to have faith in the Lord."

I spoke with Mody a few months ago before her health deteriorated. She later e-mailed me about the small reading project she and her friends had put up for poor kids in their barangay.

Mody, you stood out in a special way, among the hundreds of people (good, bad, wonderful, obnoxious) I had written about these past many years. Goodbye, and thank you for your quiet inspiration.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

More food for thought

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

SINCE we live in a Third World country, one can usually get away with justifying the eating of almost anything as being a necessity due to widespread poverty. If you're hungry, you will eat almost anything, as an extract from The Goncourt Journal, (in 1870, during the siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War) attests: "From curiosity I entered Roos's, the English butcher's shop on Boulevard Haussmann, where I observed varieties of weird remains. Hanging in the place of honor was the skinned trunk of young Pollux, the zoo elephant; and in the center of nameless joints and peculiar horns, a boy offered camel's kidneys. The master-butcher was flourishing his words to a group of ladies. 'It's forty francs a pound for fillet and trunk... yes, forty... Expensive? But I do tell you I don't see how to make a sou out of it. I was expecting three thousand pounds of flesh and the brute's yielded only two thousand. The feet? You want the price of the feet? Twenty francs! For other bits, anything from eighty to forty. But let me recommend black pudding. As you know, elephant's blood is unsurpassed in richness. His heart weighed twenty-five pounds. And, ladies, in my black pudding you'll find onion.' I put up with two larks, which I took for tomorrow's lunch."

In fact, perhaps we have something to learn from those Parisians: justifying the eating of almost anything because of poverty has its limits. Past stories in the papers—about how a *barkada*, or bunch of friends, for example, fished some (poisonous) toads out of a canal for their *pulutan*, or appetizers, and eventually ending up poisoned to death; or how another gang was all set to make *pulutan* out of a poor, sick Philippine eagle, which was mercifully rescued but which subsequently died—stretch the alibi a little thin! The enormous number of very large rats scurrying about our metropolis (real rats, not public officials) suggests that we may have overlooked a vital food source; one is tempted to echo the words of Prince Charles Joseph Bonaparte, who noted, during the Paris siege, that: "Sewer rats are considered far more a delicacy than young chickens."

The Paris Journal, (also from 1870) reveals how, even in the midst of a siege, Parisians kept their sense of style: "As the rats are imprisoned in a large cage, one has to choose the animals one wants from the medley. Using a small stick the vendor forces it into a smaller cage where it is alone, and then a bulldog is introduced, the little cage is shaken, and the rat escapes; but it is at once grabbed by the dog's powerful teeth. The dog breaks its back and drops it delicately at the customer's feet."

One (foreign, I must add) friend, when I told him this story, asked, curiously: "Funny they'd be gobbling up rats when a nice, fat bulldog would have served the same purpose." This comment took me by surprise. The common view among many Filipinos being that we are after all also known (like peoples out of the Iliad or the Odyssey) as The Dog Eaters. Since he uttered that remark I have always considered this friend to be one of the most enlightened people I know.

It's not that I don't find the consumption of dogs revolting; it is that I am sick of the hypocrisy displayed by people like the British (whose aristocracy's favorite sport is fox-hunting which, in military terms, is comparable to attacking a sand castle with an armored division). The allure of "*azucena*," the Filipino term for dog meat, is incomprehensible to me, but it doesn't justify writing off a whole country as morally reprehensible. Besides, those besieged Parisians might have taught us a thing or two today.

Here's an extract from the journal of Henry Labouchere: "I do have feelings of guilt when I devour the friend of man, the dog. The other day, I had a slice of spaniel, but it made me feel a cannibal. Dog epicures inform me that poodle is easily the best, and they recommend me not to eat bulldog, which is coarse and lacks all taste." By the way, this also answers the question posed by a friend earlier: bulldogs are simply inedible!

Here's the parting shot most foreigners leave me with after I discourse on strange food: the sick thing about the Philippines isn't the exotic dishes some of us eat; it's the luxurious dishes consumed so avidly by the upper crust while the vast majority of people must simply starve.

That's real food for thought. But cheer up: when you consume that rich meal, put yourself in Conqueror mode. Picture yourself in the shoes of Germany's Iron Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, who, in a letter from Château de Fersières (his temporary residence, as he waited for the besieged city of Paris to capitulate), described his chief problem: "There is always one dish too many. I have already decided to ruin my stomach with goose and olives, and here is Reinfeld ham, of which I can't help taking too much... and, in addition, behold, Varzin wild boar."

Eat, drink. Guilt only spoils digestion.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Being poor

YOUNG BLOOD

Al Reyes

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WHEN I was about to graduate in college, I wanted what many graduating students dreamed of: to wear a fine suit, or a well-pressed barong, or a pair of wool or cashmere pants and expensive black leather shoes; to be in an office with a pretty view of the metropolitan; to sip coffee with friends and talk about politics and business; to have a nice apartment of my own, and a car.

Seeing these dreams coming true was hard for me then. My family had barely enough money for three meals a day. Every day I walked to school, with my books and other things in a plastic bag, on a pair of slippers as thin as a cardboard, the straps kept in place by a piece of aluminum wire (stretched underneath the soles) that screeched every time it touched the pavement.

The youngest among four children, I did not enjoy the comfort and opulence that my siblings did. My father's business went sour five years after I was born. He became a farmer, carpenter, construction worker, salesman and machine operator in a printing press. He tried all kinds of jobs to send his children to school. My mother, who came from a middle class family, reared us all by herself without maids and helpers.

Things worsened when my father got sick. I was a sophomore in high school when he was diagnosed with diabetes. A small wound appeared on his left toe. It gangrened and never healed until his leg was amputated six months later. We thought it was the end of everything. But my mother, a wonderful and strong woman, did not lose hope. She started to accept laundry from our neighbors so we could eat. She sold most of her linens, clothes, plates, glasses, almost everything she could sell including their wedding rings just to provide for the family. But not once, did I hear my parents tell us to stop going to school. Instead, they gave us the option and explained to us everything.

On the way to school, I would see airplanes in the sky and I wondered how it feels to fly in one. I wondered if I would ever get to see beautiful places and tall buildings other than the rice fields, river and narrow pathways of my everyday life then.

But God is good. My siblings and I got scholarship grants in a Catholic school and graduated with honors. My brother is now the system director for a distribution company; one sister is an assistant regional director in a government agency, and the other is a university instructor. Both my sisters finished their post-graduate degrees in Sydney, Australia, while my brother, who earned his post-graduate degree in Ateneo, is now working for his doctorate degree in mathematics.

As for me, I am an officer in a universal bank. I've been living away from the province for almost four years now, but I go there for vacation during holidays. I can't count anymore the number of times I traveled to other places, here and abroad, in an airplane.

Perhaps, in a few years, I'd take advantage of whatever opportunities that would come my way. It is said that some of the greener pastures are on the other side, but I have yet to explore that side. I have achieved most of the things I longed for.

My father died three months before I graduated from college. All his children stood by his deathbed holding his hand. He looked peaceful knowing that we will all be okay. It's just unfortunate that he never lived to see us live the life he dreamed for us.

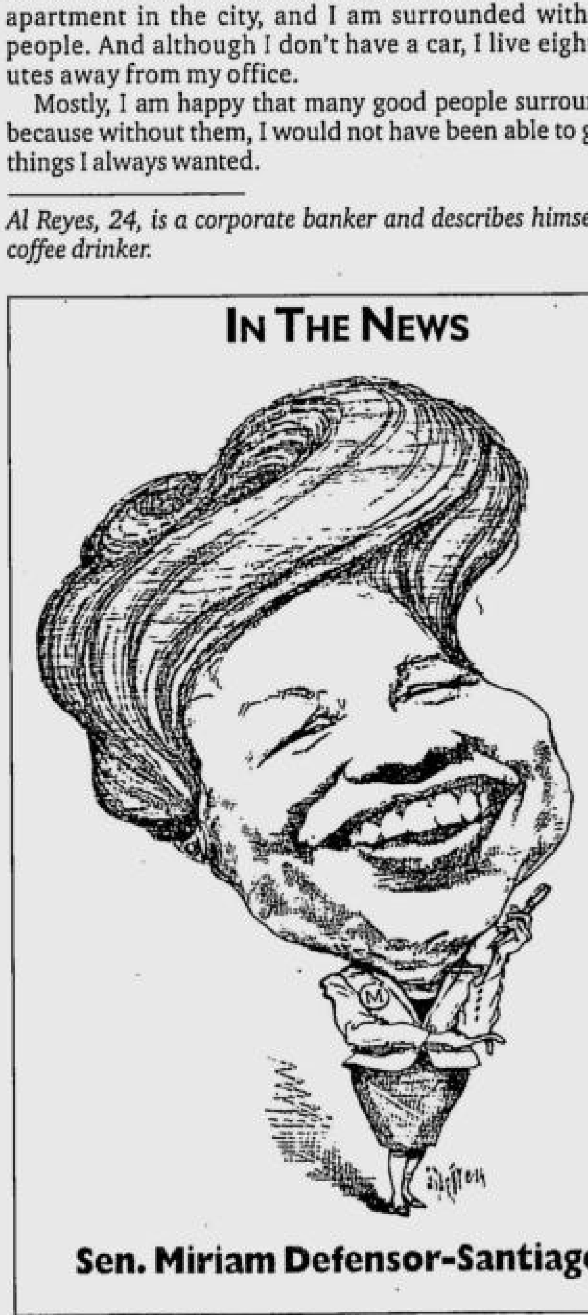
I think the best gift my parents gave me is the gift of poverty. It taught me everything I needed to know about living: perseverance, hard work, love of family, and the appreciation of small things. I would have been a different person had I not been reared in a poor family. Until now, I'm surprised at how God can teach us lessons even when we are at our lowest moments.

For now, I am happy with where I am and with what I have achieved. I wear a well-pressed barong, a pair of wool pants and good leather shoes. I have a modest view of the Makati business district, I live in a comfortable apartment in the city, and I am surrounded with good people. And although I don't have a car, I live eight minutes away from my office.

Mostly, I am happy that many good people surround me because without them, I would not have been able to get the things I always wanted.

Al Reyes, 24, is a corporate banker and describes himself as a coffee drinker.

IN THE NEWS



Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago

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Let us not forget the heroism of Filipino contingent in Iraq

AMID THE CONFUSION and uncertainty facing our society, it may do well for us to recall the deeds of our heroes if only to inspire our people.

In World War II, Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos embraced death rather than collaborate with the Japanese high command in the Philippines. Before his execution, he told his grieving son to be brave and show the enemy that Filipinos are not afraid to die for their country.

When Jose Rizal faced death in the hands of the Spaniards, his pulse was normal, this according to the doctor who attended to him. Rizal composed his poem the night before his execution.

In the face of danger to his life, Ninoy Aquino from his safe abode in the United States, chose to come home to fight for freedom for his country. As the saying goes, the rest is history. But his battle cry, "The Filipino is worth dying for," reverberated throughout the land and Edsa I broke out like a light of dawn.

There were countless Filipinos who fought in Bataan: a cook became a gunner trying to stop advancing Japanese soldiers, an act of supreme heroism. Sgt. Jose Calugas of Leon, Iloilo, was the first Asian to receive the US Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur, in paying tribute to the Filipino soldier, said, I may not know the nobility of your birth, but I do know the dignity of your death.

Our troops in Iraq deserve our most lavish praises for their heroic services as humanitarian volunteers. Without fanfare, they helped to ease the pain of a suffering people.

—ERNESTO J. DAYOT,
Guimbal, Iloilo 5022

SIF in crisis

THIS has reference to the letter of Juliana C. Padron of Cebu City (PDI, 7/17/04), inquiring about the pension due her disabled husband from the Employees' Compensation Commission, but which has not been received since January 2003.

We wish to inform Padron and other ECC public sector beneficiaries that the the State Insurance Fund (SIF), which covers the EC benefits of government workers in work-connected sickness, injury or death, is in the red and needs a critical infusion of additional funds to promptly and expeditiously meet its obligations to its beneficiaries.

The dissipation of the SIF started in the early 1980s when the EC claims of government employees exceeded the total amount of government contributions to the SIF, at the rate of P30 per employee per month, thus wiping out the SIF reserves by the early 1990s. After that, the Government Service Insurance System, which manages the SIF, had to resort to inter-fund borrowing to meet the legitimate EC claims of government employees. (SIF borrowings have reached P4.0 billion.)

In 2001, based on an actuarial study, the ECC passed a resolution increasing government contributions to the SIF from P30 per employee per month to P100 per employee per month effective 2003. The increase supposedly will allow for the prompt payment of all claims and restore the solvency of the SIF by the year 2010.

Unfortunately, national government agencies could not make their SIF payments (under the new rate) in 2003 and 2004 because Congress did not appropriate funds for that purpose for those years. It is for this reason that the ECC cannot provide its pensioners and claimants the EC benefits due them. The GSIS has been forced to establish a system of priority in the payment of EC benefits and only to the extent of total premium contributions collected.

The benefits enumerated by Padron have not been abolished but there will be some delay in their payments, depending on the liquidity of the SIF.

We are afraid that the problem might linger until 2005 with the decision of the Department of Budget and Management to keep national government SIF contributions at the old rate of P30 per employee per month.

It is our hope though that the DBM will find a way to generate enough funding to cover the new rate of SIF contributions, thus ensuring the prompt payment of all ECC benefits of government workers who are victims of work-connected sickness, injury or death.

—ELMOR D. JURIDICO,
executive director,
Employees Compensation Commission,
3/F ECC Bldg., 355 Gil Puyat Ave.,
Makati City

On the SSS-BDO deal

THIS is in reference to the letter of Jose Castillejos Sr. (PDI, 7/10/04), in which he pointed out: "That there were other buyers willing to buy the stocks at prices higher than the purchase price of Banco de Oro (BDO) should have prompted the SSS management to sell the stocks through public bidding—that is, if it were really thinking of the welfare of its members."

We want to point out that the Social Security System received offers to purchase the Equitable PCIBank shares at a higher price than BDO's after the signing of the Letter of Intent on Dec. 30, 2003.

It is unfair to characterize the deal as "shady." The LOI was reviewed by the SSS' legal and investment departments, both of which even sought the approval of the Department of Justice and Commission on Audit.

We recognize the concern expressed by some of our members. We assure them that the long-term benefits far outweigh the purported loss if the sale is finalized.

As the needs of our members increase, it is imperative for the SSS to place its investments in safer, more reliable instruments that are not subject to the vagaries of the stock market and the whims of the banking industry.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System,
East Avenue,
Diliman, Quezon City

Documents lost while in transit

IN REACTION to the letter titled "Transfer of central offices to other regions" (PDI, 7/15/04), I say this is a positive, commendable move. But sad to say, papers and documents are sometimes lost while in transit from national to regional offices.

I am an owner of a coconut land situated at Barangay Cambatutay Viejo, Tarangnan, Western Samar. This is annotated in the summary of cadastrally surveyed lands as latitude 11-53 and longitude 124-47, CAD 706-D. The survey was conducted by engineer Armando Buela in 1982-1983 and approved on March 15, 1984. Some of the original certificates of title (OCTs) were received by the land owners in 1986, while I was not able to receive my OCT 0001643.

So I personally went to the central office of the Bureau of Lands, Manila, but the document could not be located and I was advised to look for it in the regional office in Tacloban City. Despite a painstaking search conducted by an employee there, the document could not be found in the files. I was told that my document under OCT 0001643 might have been lost in transit when the BL was "regionalized."

I suggest that the transfers of papers/documents to regional offices should be effected in such a way that a miscarriage in land distribution is prevented.

—JOSE A. LUCERO,
San Francisco Street,
Barangay C, Tarangnan,
Western Samar

Angelo's ordeal calls attention to other OFW victims

I AM not a fan of Ramon Tulfo but I fully agree with him on the Angelo de la Cruz issue. As a Filipino, I am happy that De la Cruz is alive and well. All of us should thank the Lord for giving him the strength to survive such an ordeal.

However, if the government and private entities are willing to spend so much on him on the occasion of his safe return, can't it do similarly with the "returning" overseas Filipino workers who have been maltreated or killed abroad?

What makes De la Cruz more special than those who died due to terrorist attacks in foreign countries? Isn't it that their families deserve more assistance, especially so since they have lost their breadwinners?

—RAY ABERIN,
rayaberin@hotmail.com

Respecting dignity of each person

I AGREE that homosexuals deserve the respect and understanding as every other person. They must be accepted with compassion and sensitivity and that every act of discrimination toward them should be avoided.

However, it is one thing to feel a disordered attraction and quite another to submit to it and give it free rein. Homosexual acts "close the sexual act to the gift of life. And these acts do not proceed from a genuine, affective and sexual complementarity."

According to Plato, to parade one's immorality is to add a second immorality to the first; to scandalize and possibly corrupt the weak. Hypocrisy lies not in concealment but in going out of one's way to appear guiltless.

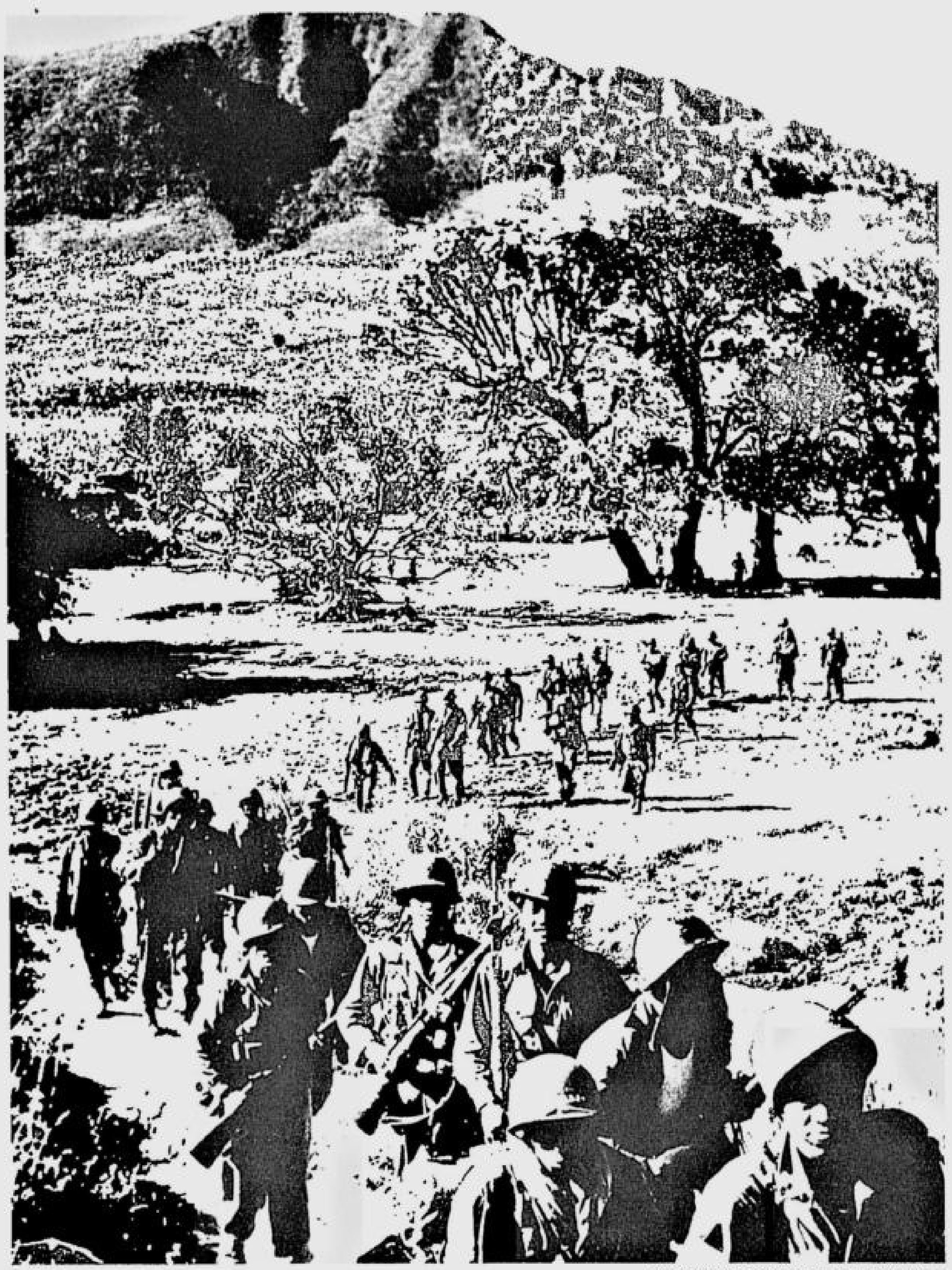
The Pink Film Festival exposed young people to erroneous ideas about sexuality and marriage. Genesis states that man was created male and female. Sexual complementarity and fruitfulness belong only to the nature of marriage and not in homosexual relations.

Pope John Paul II said during his visit in Manila in 1981, "The image you film, the sounds you record, the programs you broadcast cross every barrier of time and space... What people see and hear heavily influence how they think and act."

The organizer of the Pink Film Festival and SM cinemas can do so much good in society and for the youth if they would be more discerning of the values which the people adhere to—marriage and the family.

In the end, it is not a question of expression or license to do what is illicit but it is a matter of being responsible for and respecting the dignity of each person.

—GLECY G. GAMBOA,
17th Avenue, Murphy,
Cubao, Quezon City



KASAYSAYAN THE STORY OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

A documentary for our youth

OUR family saw on television a one-hour documentary on the legacy of our heroes in Bataan and Corregidor during World War II. The documentary should be made a required viewing for all students—in public and private schools. Why?

1. We have taken our democratic life/freedom for granted, especially the youth. The documentary shows how hard it was to defend democracy from foreign invaders. This documentary will drive home the message that, truly, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

2. That in war there are no victors, only losers.

3. That our youth, nay, even our elders, may imbibe the culture of peace, not war.

We hope that the education secretary will consider this suggestion.

—JOSE T. APOLO,
4368 Rosemallow Rd.,
Sun Valley Subd., Parañaque City

Iraq war will sink Bush administration

I AM one of the thousands of Filipinos slugging it out here in New York. As a volunteer of the Kerry-Edwards ticket, I am of the belief that things both in the Philippines and the United States will turn for the better once the arrogant and mindless Bush administration is booted out. But we can't relax our guard just yet, what with the Machiavellian tricks up its sleeve.

I find it comforting that President Macapagal-Arroyo has decided to pull the miniscule Philippine contingent out of the quagmire that is Iraq. The Iraq mess has become the albatross in George W. Bush's neck and will likely sink his administration to oblivion. It will take another Democratic administration to straighten things out, as has always been the case.

So what if the United States is pissed off at the seeming wishy-washiness of the Philippine stance? I must point out that a single human life is more precious than all the treasures in the universe. Here in New York, speeding ambulances, with their deafening sirens, crisscross the avenues, making sure that a single human life is taken care of. Only a dumb president will not appreciate that.

Under Bush's stewardship, the United States is fast becoming a Third World nation—corruption here, corruption there; fascistic tactics here, fascistic tactics there—and gargantuan budget deficits! Now Bush is trying to steal the elections again. Thank goodness, the majority of Americans are not stupid and will never fall for it.

—BENITO B. MARAY,
243 Suydam St., Brooklyn,
New York 11237,
benmaray@yahoo.com

Growing old

HIGH BLOOD

Alito L. Malinao

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

THE FIRST time someone called me "Manong," I panicked. It was like getting jolted by a live wire. But my world really collapsed when, while I was standing inside a commuter bus—a young lady stood up and politely offered her seat to me. "*Lolo, maupo, ho, kayo*," she said.

That was about 15 years ago, when I was still in my early 40s. Like being struck with a thunderbolt, I could not believe, much less accept, the reality that I was growing old and nearing the twilight zone. It seemed like it was only yesterday when I was full of zest. When you are young, you don't actually walk—you swagger. You seem to be always in a hurry.

While covering the diplomatic beat and eventually working in the desk, everything seemed to be on the fast lane. So much to do in so little time. Events must be covered, stories must be written, rewritten and copyread; deadlines must be met.

It was a dizzying world. After an exhaustive day at the desk, you need to unwind, to replenish the zapped energy, and you drink. In my younger days, every time I went to my favorite watering hole, I vowed to drink only six bottles. But after guzzling six bottles of the golden brew, I usually lost count or just stopped counting altogether.

At the National Press Club, it was not unusual for bar habitués like me to stay up to the wee hours of the morning, with the convenient excuse of waiting for the traffic to ease up—drinking beer or playing a game of *balut* or *domino* and doing other things afterwards. The options were infinite. It was indeed an orgiastic life.

In mid-morning the day after, you wondered how you reached home alive in your rickety 1969 Toyota. You swore that some unseen hands might have driven you home because you could not even remember boarding your car, let alone driving it home. Thinking of it now really scares me no end.

In his most memorable poem, "Youth," Samuel Ullman says, "youth is not a time of life, it is a state of mind. It is not a matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees. It is a matter of the will, a quality of imagination, a vigor of the emotions.

"You are only as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair," Ullman continues.

Encouraging words, huh? And John Keats has told us that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." So, Ullman could never be but correct.

But is it state of mind when the pain in your legs, caused by gout or arthritis, would not go away? Or when you are gasping for breath during a bout with asthma, or when your left extremities refuse to obey your brain's command because the nerves have been deadened by a recent stroke?

Is it state of mind when you can feel a sudden blip in your heart probably because of wear and tear? Or having a failing vision or a fading memory?

Tempura mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis. The times are changing, and we with the times.

With apologies to Ullman, for me growing old is not a state of mind but a time of life. Better still, a time when life has fully ripened and ready to be plucked by the Giver.

Indeed, you are already growing old when you experience the following:

- When driving, you allow the car that tails you to overtake and cut into your lane, yet you do not curse.
- When you become more tolerant with your staff if you are the boss, and with yourself if you are not.
- When, after 30 years of marriage, you suddenly realize that your wife cooks the best food in the world.
- When you begin to smell the fragrance of the roses in your wife's garden.
- When you want to knock off early and rise early to watch the crack of dawn and savor the last drop of sunlight, fearing that that day could be your last.
- When visits to your doctor become more frequent.
- When you prefer to horse around with your grandchildren instead of playing around with GROs in beer joints.
- When you have your fill with one glass of red wine in the evening instead of the usual "six bottles" of beer.
- When you enjoy being alone in your library, listening to the oldies of Nat King Cole, Jerry Vale, or Henry Mancini.
- When your greatest dream is to make that long-delayed trip to your home village to go fishing or just to take a glimpse, perhaps for the last time, of those familiar spots in your childhood.
- When you begin to discover the power of prayers and to silently commune with your God, a thing that you failed to do for many years.

If you have experienced all these, and many more, welcome to the club. Feeling old, like misery, certainly loves company.

Alito L. Malinao, 62, is currently a consultant at the Office of the Press Secretary. He was a former diplomatic reporter and news editor of the Manila Standard. He teaches at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and is the author of "Journalism for Filipinos."

NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Room 201, Bonuan Apartelle
10 Happy Glen Loop, Baguio City
Tel. No. (074)443-9255
Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU
23 Aurora St., Old Albay District
Legazpi City
Tel. No. (052) 820-8402
Fax No. (052) 820-1274
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION
E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Text Feedback: Inquirer atn name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
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US SHIP DISCHARGE

Stop blaming us, Olongapo folk say

By Ansbert Joaquin
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Residents in Barangay Kalaklan in Olongapo City said accusations that the human wastes found in Subic Bay waters on July 27 came from the Kalaklan River and not discharged by the American vessel, USS Russell, were unfair.

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority on Friday slapped a US$10,000 fine against the USS Russell after the SBMA's port operations division head, Jerome Martinez, reported that SBMA port personnel saw the vessel discharging wastes directly into the sea. The wastes were found out later to be human wastes.

The US Embassy earlier denied the dumping by any US ship of human waste into Subic Bay.

An Agence France-Presse report quoted American embassy spokeswoman Ruth Urry as saying that during a routine transfer of sewage from the ship to a waste disposal truck last week, a leak was noticed and the pumping stopped.

USS Russell is a guided missile destroyer and one of the four US vessels that docked in Subic on July 27 as part of the Cooperation Afloat Readiness Training (Carat) Exercise 2004.

Eventual victims

Lyn de Paz, chair of a people's organization in Barangay Kalaklan, said residents along the Kalaklan River, which drains into the bay, are conscious of the fact that they are the ones who will directly suffer should the Kalaklan River be polluted with human or any other wastes.

De Paz said a large septic tank in the barangay was built precisely to educate the residents on the proper use of toilets.

Martinez said in his report that some US Navy personnel accosted a port investigator who was taking photos of the wastes using a digital camera, and confiscated the diskette in which the photo-documentation was stored.

After receiving a copy of the incident report, Amethya de la Llana, SBMA ecology department head, issued a notice of violation and fined the erring vessel $10,000.

Martinez, however, later told the INQUIRER that the incident report he signed on July 29 was erroneous.

Anti-pollution program

He said his port investigators may just have been "overzealous in performing their duties" and that the human wastes found "might just have been driven by tide from the Kalaklan River."

On Wednesday, the USS Russell has not yet paid the fine nor has it complied with any of the instructions, like conducting a clean up, contained in the notice of violation.

De Paz said her organization, the Magulang na May Isang Layunin Tungo sa Wastong Kalusugan sa Kalaklan Inc. (Mag-ilaw Ka Kalaklan Inc.), is addressing the problem of pollution in their community by launching the "Basura-Para-sa-Pagkain" (garbage for food) program.

Despite their campaign, De Paz, however, admitted "it is still a possibility that human wastes may originate from Kalaklan River."

But she said but these may only come in trickles.

"It is very hard to imagine that these wastes will reach Alava Pier, much less in bulk that will cover six square meters of the Subic waters," she said.

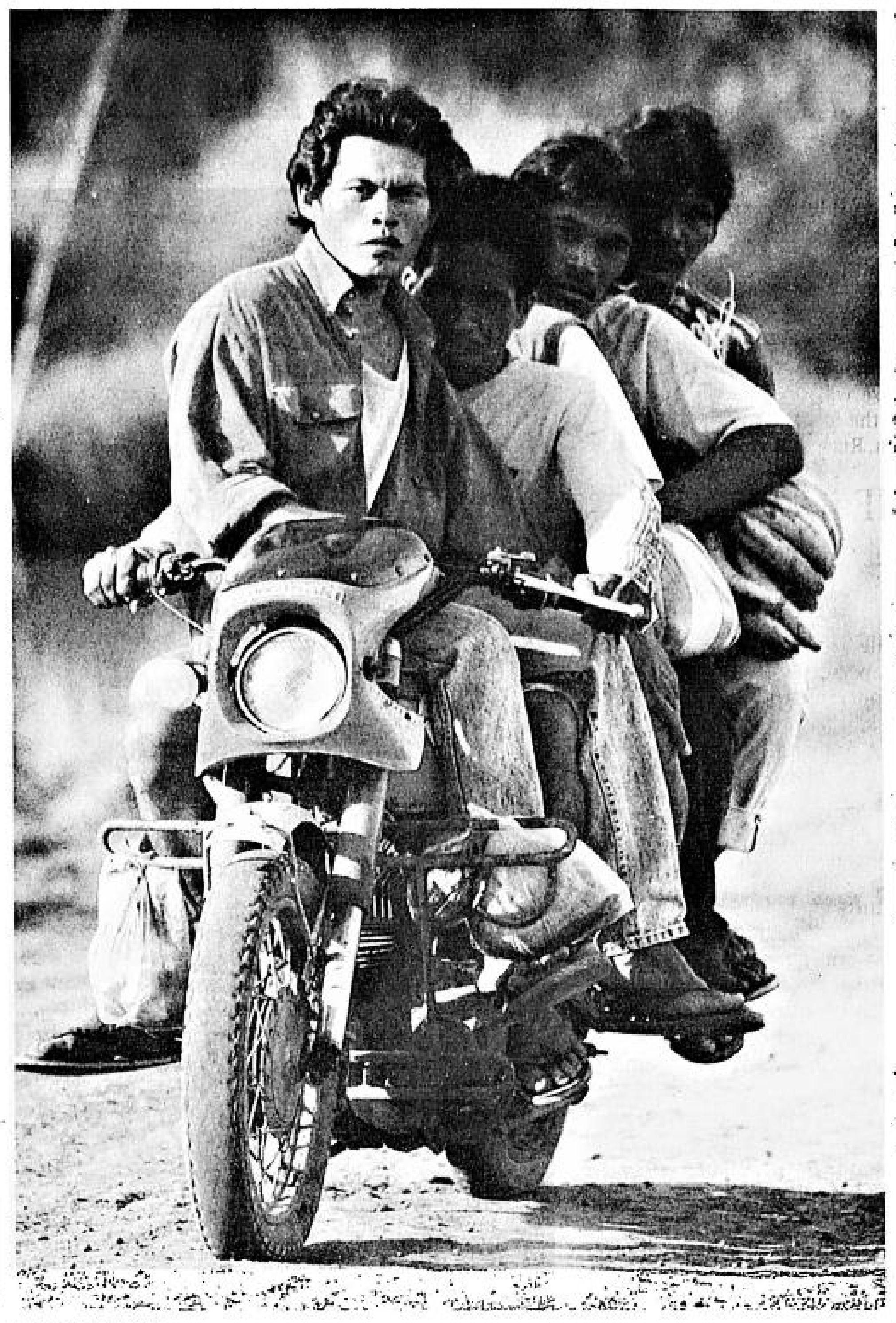
On Wednesday, representatives of the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement arrived here. The INQUIRER, however, received conflicting statements on the purpose of their visit.

Probing probers

While at least three SBMA officials on Tuesday said the representatives would conduct an investigation of the supposed human waste discharge by USS Russell, Mariflor Cabahug, a staff member of the public relations office of the Philippine Navy, said the visit was for the closing ceremonies of the Carat exercise.

Cabahug denied that the visit had anything to do with the human waste discharge issue.

When the INQUIRER sought the three SBMA officials, they refused to answer and directed this correspondent to Nicolas Leonzon, SBMA deputy administrator for seaport operations.



TRUE GRIT AFP
This motorcycle ride in North Cotabato is not for the faint-hearted. But it's an ordinary mode of transportation in the province's farmlands where bad roads make mobility by motor vehicles quite difficult.

ROUNDUP

Bridge collapse hurts 23

ROXAS CITY—Twenty-three workers were hurt when a portion of the bridge they were constructing collapsed on Sunday in Dumalag town, Capiz. Capiz District engineer Orlando Panaguiton said those hurt were workers of ARN Builders, one of the contractors of the bridge project that connects Barangays San Roque and Poblacion proper. The accident happened when the seventh span of the bridge gave way due to strong currents and flood. Nestor Rodriguez, project engineer of ARN Builder, said the company would pay for the hospitalization of the 23 workers. The P33-million project started in April last year and was funded by the Countrywide Development Fund of Capiz Rep. Fredenil Castro, brother of Dumalag Mayor Ricardo Castro Jr. The construction work on the 240-meter bridge is being handled by two contractors—ARN Builder and Green Harvest.

Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau

27 dengue cases

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Health authorities in San Pablo City and Laguna province have reminded residents to take extra precaution against dengue, which has victimized 27 persons. Geraldine Royo, Department of Health's dengue monitoring officer in San Pablo City, said her office had monitored at least 21 dengue patients confined in various hospitals in the city. Barangay San Diego had the highest number of cases with seven victims. She said her team was conducting "larval surveys" in the city to educate people on the proper ways of preventing a dengue outbreak. In Pangil town, church worker Jerome Takoree's nephew was one of the latest victims of dengue. He said five other dengue patients were identified in Barangay Sulib.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cop posts shuffled

CALAPAN CITY—Calapan City chief of police Supt. Alexander Aceveda has been assigned as concurrent assistant provincial director of the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Police Office (OMPPO) with the death of deputy police chief Supt. Rodrigo Foja. The 409th Provincial Mobile Group (PMG), which used to be headed by Foja, is now led by Senior Insp. Joe Welson, the intelligence and operations officer of OMPPO for two years under Foja. The 409th PMG was cited No. 1 in antidrug operations (Best PMG) by the PNP-Mimaropa, which made the regional PNP first in antidrug operations in the country last year, said PO2 Gaudencio Callo, operations officer of the 409th PMG.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

League fetes governor

THE LIGA ng mga Barangay sa Pilipinas led by its president James Marty Lim, feted Mark Lapid, newly elected governor of Pampanga, in ceremonies held at the Bren Guiao Convention Center in Pampanga recently. Lapid has been Punong Barangay of Poblacion in Porac and had enjoyed stints as member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan by virtue of his being Liga President of Pampanga. Present during Governor Lapid's oath-taking were family members of the elected governor that included outgoing governor and senator-elect Lito Lapid and PBA Coach Yeng Guiao, son of the late Governor Guiao, according to a news release.

Trader cries harassment after filing raps vs export execs

By Bernadette A. Parco
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—"*Gibaslan mi* (She is getting back at us)."

This was the reaction of Franklin Ty, plant manager of Pearl City Manufacturing Corp. (PCMC) to the cancellation of the company's registration with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza).

Ty told the INQUIRER that he believed that the cancellation had something to do with the graft complaint he filed against Peza director general Lilia de Lima and three others before the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission.

He said he filed the complaint on July 22 and four days later, he received a decision from the Peza that his registration of investment incentives had been revoked.

The PCMC at the Mactan Export Processing Zone I is engaged in the recycling and processing of used clothing into wool fiber, cotton fiber, polyester fiber, usable clothing and industrial wiping rugs.

In a separate interview, De Lima denied Ty's allegation, saying the board's decision to revoke PCMC's registration was made on July 13.

"We faxed the decision to Ty on July 22 at 4:49 in the afternoon. Ty filed his complaint the next day, on the 23rd," she said.

De Lima said she was discussing with her lawyers the possible countercharges she would file against the exporter.

"I will put this guy in jail. I will file libel and criminal charges against him for trying to destroy my untainted reputation there in Cebu," she told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Ty filed a letter-complaint against De Lima, Peza Deputy Director General for Operations Harriet Abordo, Lita Malicdan and Felicidad Sayo for allegedly violating Republic Act No. 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

The Peza made a special audit of PCMC to check allegations that the company had unaccounted importation of 8.26 million kilograms or 330 containers of used clothes from January 2003 to March 2004.

In his affidavit, Ty said during a special audit May 31, a Peza official asked for P2 million to "fix their problem."

Ty alleged the official told him that "DG" and "DDG" already knew about the arrangement, referring to Director General and the Deputy Director General.

"Felicidad Sayo continued saying, '*Alam mo palaging ginawa namin to sa mga* locators. *Hindi kasi kayo nagbibigay sa kanila eh* (We usually make this kind of arrangement with our locators. It is just you who doesn't give them anything)," Ty said in his sworn statement.

"That is a lot of trash," said De Lima. "How come if the alleged extortion was done in May as he said in his affidavit, he waited for almost two months to file a complaint?"

Flies invade Zambales village; poultry blamed

IBA, Zambales—Swarms of flies have invaded an eastern village in this town, forcing residents to temporarily find shelter elsewhere and seek help from local authorities due to fears of an outbreak of diseases in the area.

The INQUIRER learned that the insects have been reported in Barangay Sta. Barbara and the sitios of Alwab, Prensa and Caliguet there.

Residents also complained of the foul smell coming from a poultry farm in their village.

Victoriana Camoyong, Sta. Barbara Village chair, said villagers submitted a petition to the Iba town council on Friday to seek help in ridding the affected areas of insects.

The residents also urged the closure of the poultry farm.

"Our lives here are difficult due to these pesky insects. We could not bear this anymore. We are forced to eat our meals inside mosquito nets," said resident Randy Quimson.

Another resident said her eight-month-old daughter got sick due to the flies and smell coming from the poultry farm.

Reports gathered by Councilor Al Fallorin, health committee chair of the Iba council, showed that the farm is owned by former Zambales Rep. Pacita Gonzalez and was put up in the area in 2001.

In a telephone interview, Gonzalez, wife of former Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez, denied reports that her poultry is source of the health troubles of residents in the area. *Cesar Villa, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Davao River rehab may cost ₱4B

DAVAO CITY—The Davao River Conservation and Coordinating Committee (DRCCC) said it needs about P4 billion to fully rehabilitate the dying Davao River.

The 180-kilometer Davao River is the third largest river in Mindanao traversing three provinces and finally emptying into the Davao Gulf.

Engineer Cristy Gallano, DRCCC executive director, said the World Bank has signified interest in funding about P1 billion of the money needed for a rehabilitation program provided that the local government will raise a counterpart fund.

"The counterpart fund is only about 10-15 percent so it's very small," she said.

It translates to about P150 million.

"Mayor (Rodrigo) Duterte said the city can shoulder that cost," she said.

The committee also received communication from National Economic Development Authority (Neda) chief Romulo Neri stating that the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) can also be a funding source.

Gallano cited four major problems facing the Davao River basin.

These include hydrology, environment, livelihood, and government policies.

"When rain comes, flooding is the obvious impact that affects livelihood, mainly by communities living in the barangay located in low-lying areas of the river," she said.

The Davao River Situation Report recognized river pollution; water drainage and surface runoff; river bank erosion; soil erosion; flooding; health impacts of pesticide use; and lack of implementation of existing laws as among the factors that contribute to the deterioration of the river.

In the effort to rehabilitate the river, Gallano said they need to relocate about 70,000 households living along the river. They initially identified a site in Marilog District but the residents in the area are not open to relocating in a remote district and leaving their sources of livelihood behind.

Joel Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau

C. Visayas commuters to pay only ₱5 fare

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Starting Wednesday, commuters in Central Visayas will only have to pay P5 in minimum fare for public utility jeepneys.

This came after the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board in Central Visayas (LTFRB-7) ordered fare be reduced despite the objections of transport groups here.

Jose Douglas Sanson, acting LTFRB regional director, said the minimum fare for the first 5 km is now pegged at P5 and 70 centavos for every succeeding kilometer.

He said the additional 70 centavos should be computed using the formula of "rounds off to the nearest P.50."

This means that the jeepney fare for 6 km will be P5.50; 7 km, P6.50; 8 km, P7; 9 km, P8; 10 km, P8.50; 11 km, P9; 12 km, P10; 13 km, P10.50; 14 km, P11.50; and 15 km, P12.

The order, issued on Tuesday, would cover not just Cebu but the other provinces in the region—Bohol, Siquijor and Negros Oriental.

Sanson said the order took effect yesterday because the printing of the fare matrixes was finished on Tuesday afternoon.

But Anthony Pogado, Nagkahiusang Drayber sa Sugbo (Nadsu) chair, said the new order was "unfair" for drivers.

He said the rates granted by LTFRB were negligible because oil companies increased anew the prices of fuel products on Monday.

Pogado, however, said they were willing to accept the new rates "for now" pending the meeting of Nadsu members with other transport groups to discuss their next move.

The LTFRB implemented nationwide on June 12 an increase in the fare rate from a minimum of P4 for the first 5 km to P5.50 for the first 4 km, and from 57 centavos for each succeeding kilometer to P1.

But a group of lawyers headed by Manuel Iway, former regional director of the Land Transportation Office, filed a petition for fare reduction, which the transport groups in Cebu strongly opposed.

In mid-July, the LTFRB here prematurely announced a decision to reduce basic fare to P5.

It had triggered confusion among jeepney drivers and commuters. Some drivers insisted on collecting P5.50 but some commuters insisted on paying 50 centavos less.

Some transport groups protested the announcement and demanded that the fare be pegged at P5 for the first 4 km and an additional 70 centavos for every succeeding kilometer.

Sanson said the LTFRB in Manila granted the petition last month and reduced the fare to P5 for the first 5 km. The agency, however, granted the drivers' clamor for the additional 70 centavos for every succeeding kilometer.

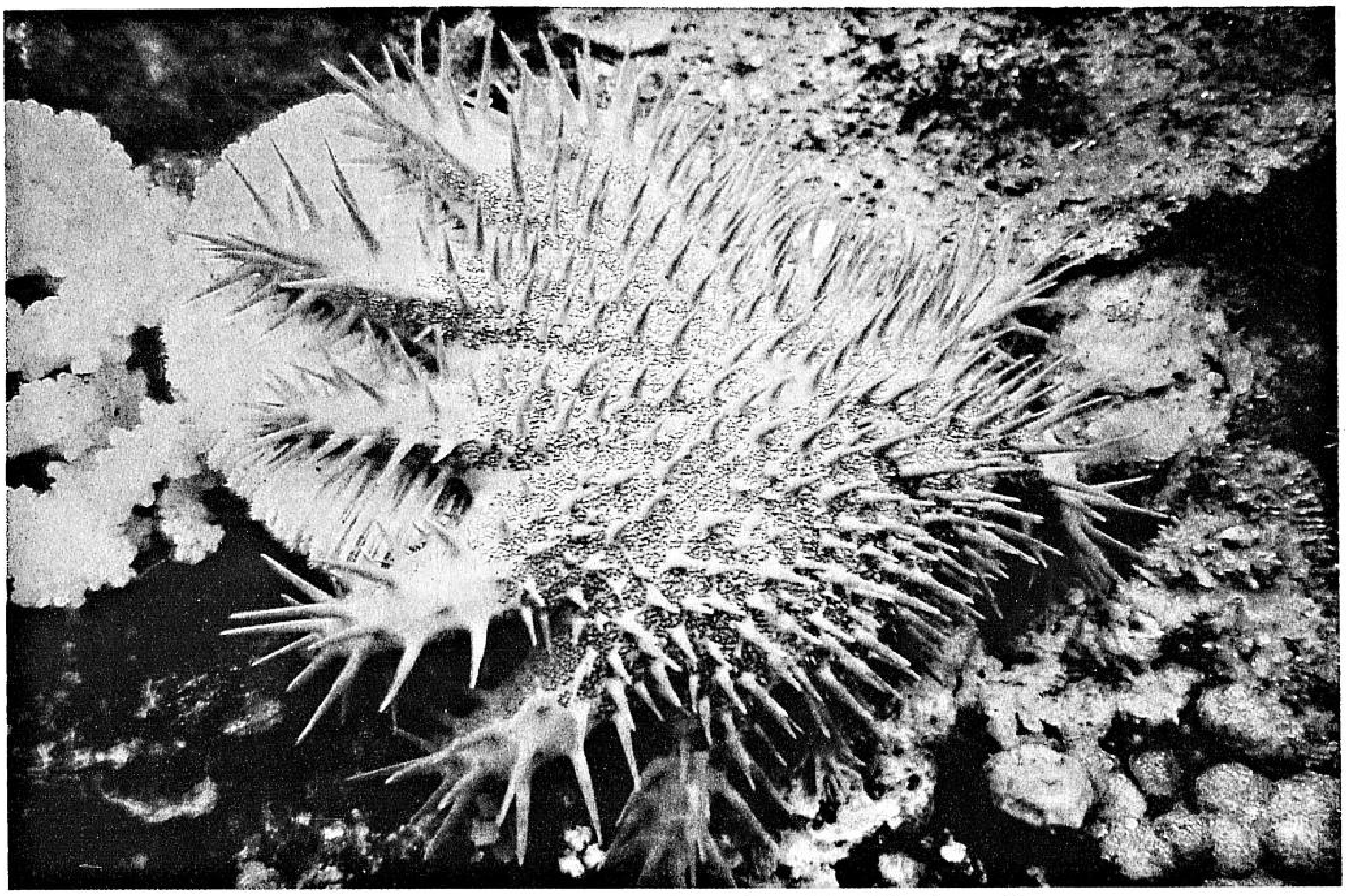
E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Crown of thorns: Calvary for corals

By Joanna Teressa P. Los Baños
Malinao, Albay



THE SCOURGE of divers called crown of thorns

GOTO ALPARCE/CONTRIBUTOR

UNDER water, they are a beautiful sight. And a lot of varieties of them are actually harmless.

But among the sea stars (also known as starfish), the crown of thorns or cot sea star is a scourge of sea divers and corals. They inflict wounds on humans and destroy corals.

Like any other sea star, a cot (*Acanthaster rancii*), locally called the *lapa-lapa* , has a star-shaped body. It also has tentacles connected to the center called disk.

A study of the Australian Institute of Marine Science says the cot starfish looks somewhat sinister as it is covered by many very sharp spines four to five centimeters long, which can inflict painful wounds.

The institute's website, www.aims.gov.au, says the cot starfish contains toxic compounds called saponins, which are believed to prevent them from being eaten by certain animals.

A cot's sting could also cause nausea and vomiting. The area around the puncture turns dark blue and swells for days. If the victim has multiple wounds, the whole limb may stiffen and swell and numbness and itchiness around the wounds set in.

Coral destroyer

The cots eat the tiny coral polyps then leave the coral's skeletons susceptible to invasion by algae, worms, boring mollusks or reef-settling organisms.

"These skeletons, however, have small holes called coral cups. And these coral cups have tiny animals in them called polyps," said Jo Roco, secretary of the Bicol Scuba Divers Foundation and science research specialist of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The giant triton shells (*Charonia tritonis*), locally known as the *budyong*, are supposed to eat the cots. But in the reefs of Barangays Jonop and Baybay, fronting the Curangon Shoal, a fish sanctuary and marine reserve in Lagonoy Gulf in Malinao, Albay, 31 km north of Legazpi City, there are no more triton shells to eat the cots, thus causing an outbreak.

"It can already be considered an outbreak because of the large population of crown of thorns sea stars here," Norberto Resontoc, municipal agriculture officer, said.

This is the cause of the high coral mortality in the reefs, Resontoc said. Corals are where most of the fish and other sea creatures live.

Roco advised that even if a coral is dead, people should not get it because there is a chance for polyps to grow again, thereby reviving the corals.

"The crown of thorns keeps on multiplying because there is food," said Beata Borbon, agricultural technologist in the fisheries department of the Municipal Agriculture Office and community organizer of the community-based resource management project in Malinao. The cot eats planktons.

"When I was still studying, I never encountered the specie because I didn't think there were a lot of it in the sea," he said. Most of them learned of the cot's existence only after an assessment made by Roco's group in 2002.

"If the crown of thorns [continue to] eat the coral polyps, the fish would be forced to look for other places to live, thus making it hard for the fishermen here to catch fish," she said.

Predator

Cots, which can be found on coral reefs, eat 60 square centimeters of coral cover a day, Roco said.

In 2002, Jonop and Baybay had 90 hectares of live coral cover, which still fell under the "good" category. This could decrease, however, because of the increasing number of cots.

"But the giant tritons do not exist here anymore. I believe we had those creatures here before but then, there were a lot of compressor divers who got the shells and sold them," he said.

Collecting giant tritons is banned under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species, Fisheries Administrative Order, said Tristan Paylado of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Section 97 of Republic Act 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 also bans the catching or possessing of endangered species, Paylado added.

Other sea creatures, that have been observed to eat the young cots are the puffer fish, two species of trigger fish, a shrimp and a worm, Moran said.

Whether these predators can help cut down the population of cot sea stars had not been proven yet.

Mission

On July 8 and 9, Roco and local divers had a reassessment. After finding that the reefs had been infested with cots, Roco suggested to Resontoc and Mayor Emily Kare, both divers, to conduct a coastal cleanup, that included gathering of cots.

With Project SOS (Save Our Seas), 30 divers gathered on July 25 to help Malinao folk, especially those from Jonop and Baybay, remove the cots from the reefs.

At least 23 members of the Bicol Scuba Divers Foundation, three from the Philippine Navy Special Warfare Group, three volunteer divers and another divers' organization, all from Legazpi, went to Jonop to gather as much cot sea stars as they could.

Barangay residents and Malinao officials were thankful of the activity, having learned of the destruction these cots could do to their reefs.

Jonop is situated between the sea and rice fields, so most of the male villagers are farmers or fishermen, or both. The women weave abaca.

A MEMBER of the Bicol Scuba Divers Foundation gathers a crown of thorns.

JOANNA TERESSA P. LOS BAÑOS

If the reefs are destroyed, the residents would have nothing but their rice fields to rely on for their livelihood.

"Malinao is a fourth-class municipality so we do not have enough resources for this kind of problem," Kare said.

For the divers to enjoy their delicate mission, the organizers made the gathering of the cots a contest.

Damage

The winning group collected 370 cots and was awarded a trophy and a small amount of money. In all, the divers gathered 1,302 cots in more than an hour's dive.

Four divers also collected 389 cots. When added to the number collected on July 25, the total reached 1,696, enough to save 37 hectares a year, in Roco's computation.

But many of the divers agreed that there were still many cots left in the reefs. One said the situation was no longer a joke.

There were still illegal fishers and compressor divers who also damage the seas, Roco added.

He instructed the divers not to touch the cot sea star since its thorns emit a poisonous liquid that causes pain, which lasts for hours, and skin lesions that don't heal for months.

He asked them to be really careful not to cut the tentacles because if a tentacle was cut, it would develop and become another cot.

He also asked them not to stab it because the eggs might stay in the sea.

To gather the creatures, each diver was given a 15-inch long bamboo stick and a sack where they placed the cots. The bamboo was used to get the cots.

Divers were instructed to slide the bamboo in between the cot and the coral, then gently lift the stick so the cot would automatically hold on it.

Solution

Kare admitted that the town administration had little resources to arrest the cot outbreak. For now, they are educating the people and apprehending the illegal fishers.

"Because our budget is not enough and we still lack skills, I suggest that research institutions, especially the Marine Science Institute at the University of the Philippines, conduct a study on how to culture giant tritons," Roco said.

"If our coral reefs are destroyed, definitely, the supply of fish will decrease. Based on a study, a good coral cover will give us 20 tons of fish per year, while a poor one will give five tons of fish a year.

Tanong ng Bayan

INQ TV

ABC Tuwing Huwebes, 8pm

I-text ang inyong "fearless view" sa 2910. Pipiliin namin ang pinakamagaling na sagot. Ang premyo linggo-linggo:
Isang 21" color TV set!
I-type: INQTV <ang inyong sagot>, <buong pangalan>, <siyudad o probinsiya>, tapos ipadala sa 2910. Cut-off time: WEDNESDAY, 6 PM. Winner will be identified during the InqTV program: Thursday, 8pm, on ABC.

Dapat bang limitahan ang dami ng anak?

Narito ang ilan sa inyong mga sagot. Abangan ang winning entry ngayong alas-8 n.g., sa ABC.

"pano na ang manoy ni pinoy kung pagpipigil ay pairalin, status sa lipunan, masokismo y mababawasan rin"
Ma. Snooky S. Dorendez, Tondo, Manila

"corruption nga d mapigilan,kahirapan ng masa walang kalutasan,dami ng anak limitahan? paktang gilas lang yan-ng mga manlilinlang"
Randy M. Balbona, Negros Occidental

Island offers nature's beauty, bounty

By Emir Emano Gamis
Castilla, Sorsogon

LITTLE-KNOWN Malawmawan Island in Castilla, Sorsogon, is a perfect place for tourists, nature lovers and divers searching for a relatively unexplored getaway.

By bus, it takes 10 hours from Manila, one-and-a-half hours from Legazpi City and 45 minutes from Sorsogon City to reach the 39-hectare island and its white sand and closely arrayed rows of coconut and other fruit-bearing trees. The place also offers a magnificent view of the Mayon Volcano jutting out to clear sky.

Wild ducks and other migratory birds frequent a nine-hectare fishpond on the island. Nearby are diving sites, islands and islets, where one can view whale sharks, locally known as *butanding* (*Rhincodon typus*), particularly during March and April.

According to local fishermen, marine turtles, locally called *pawikan*, also hatch eggs in some parts of Malawmawan. Dolphins have also been sighted.

Tourist destination

For good reasons, Malawmawan is being touted by the local government as among the top tourist destinations of Sorsogon.

Mayor Renato Laurenaria, who is a scuba diver, has seen Castilla inland and under water, and has vouched for the island's rich marine resources and beauty.

"We don't just offer whale shark watching, but also scuba diving, island hopping, and visits to our pearl farm," Laurenaria said.

From Barangay Cumadcad in Castilla, it takes about 10 minutes by tricycle or jeepney to reach Barangay Poblacion. From there, a 15-minute motorboat ride brings one to Malawmawan. Boat rental is P200 to P300, while passenger fare is P20.

Visitors can hire a tour guide to accompany them in exploring Castilla's waters.

Fish sanctuary

The municipal government has initiated a 150-hectare fish sanctuary and marine reserve project to protect marine life and restore the whale sharks' feeding areas that had been destroyed by dynamite fishing.

It has also enforced a "no fishing" policy inside the 50-hectare core area of the project. It plans to put up a guardhouse soon to oversee marine protection and conservation.

Hunting of wild ducks is also prohibited.

One need not worry about food as various kinds of fish and crustaceans are available in the market in Poblacion and in the Malawmawan fishpond.

The absence of electricity on the island might turn off some visitors, but a campfire at night while grilling fish and other seafood and the sound of waves lapping on the shore are cool throwbacks to the past and can ease disappointment.

Malawmawan has three cottages that need repair. Laurenaria has promised to construct at least 30 more cottages to accommodate visitors and tourists.

Despite its present bareness, the island is always ready to offer nature's beauty and bounty.

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(In exact order)

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METRO

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Desk Editors **Cenon B. Bibe, Ester G. Dipasupil**

MEGALOTTO 6/45 7 13 15 24 26 39

Pasig City blaze kills father, son

By Luige del Puerto

A FAITH healer and his son were burned to death in a 30-minute fire after midnight Tuesday in Pasig City. The two were trapped, authorities said.

Neighbors told investigators that Hector Ponce, 62, died in an apparent attempt to find and rescue his 9-year-old son, Sam.

Minutes after the fire broke out, neighbors could hear the father frantically screaming for his son, according to FO1 Salvador Norberte.

Separately found

After the blaze, Ponce's body was found on the ground floor, while that of Sam was on the second floor of their house at 517 Napsala Compound, Barangay Kalawaan.

Their bodies were burned beyond recognition.

While the fire was raging, neighbors tried to help in the rescue of the victims but they could not break through the iron gate of the house, investigators said.

It was not known where the boy's mother was.

Candles on the altar

Fire officials suspect that candles placed at an altar used by Ponce in his faith healing activities could have sparked the fire.

"Neighbors said that the candles were always lighted. He was a faith healer," Norberte said.

Officials said around P100,000 worth of property was destroyed in the fire.

An adjacent home was also damaged, but the damage was negligible, officials said.

Extort raps spoil hero-cop's feat

By Luige del Puerto

THE FORTUNES of the Mandaluyong Police abruptly rose and fell in 24 hours, leaving its members confused and frustrated over the unexpected turn of events.

A day after SPO1 Charlito Corpuz received accolades—including an on-the-spot promotion for single-handedly stopping three bus robbers on Saturday—three colleagues and a civilian employee were arrested for allegedly extorting P150,000 from two suspected drug offenders.

The three Mandaluyong lawmen and a civilian agent were hauled off to Camp Crame by about 20 heavily armed members of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (AIDSOTF) who stormed city police headquarters shortly after lunch yesterday.

After showing their operation letter, the AIDSOTF officers went straight to the city's antidrug unit office and apprehended the officers inside.

Now detained in Camp Crame are SPO3 Rodel Castalone, the antidrug unit head; PO1 Salvador del Mundo and PO1 Jefferson Gonzales. Also arrested was Dennis Soriano, an errand boy.

Mandaluyong policemen said the raid took them by surprise.

"We initially thought we were being attacked," an official said.

Tension was high, the officer added. "But there was never any need to draw arms. The raiding team explained its intention well," he said. "Personally, I just feel insulted."

Sr. Supt. Ericson Velasquez, city police chief, said he felt embarrassed and angry.

"I feel very sad," he said over the phone. "Honestly, I'm still in limbo."

The police chief lamented how a few bad eggs could "pull down" an institution.

"It's very frustrating. Just when we do something good, someone would do something (bad). It pulls down the institution," he said.

Velasquez said he intended to support any charges that the AIDSOTF would file against the accused officers. "We will not condone these officers," he said.

Radio reports said the city's antinarcotics officers earlier arrested the son of one Alicia Loret, and in exchange for his freedom, they demanded P50,000.

Loret sought the help of AIDSOTF, which immediately set up an entrapment operation, the reports said.

Caught accepting money

At 2:30 p.m., Soriano was collared by AIDSOTF agents while accepting P20,000 from Alicia.

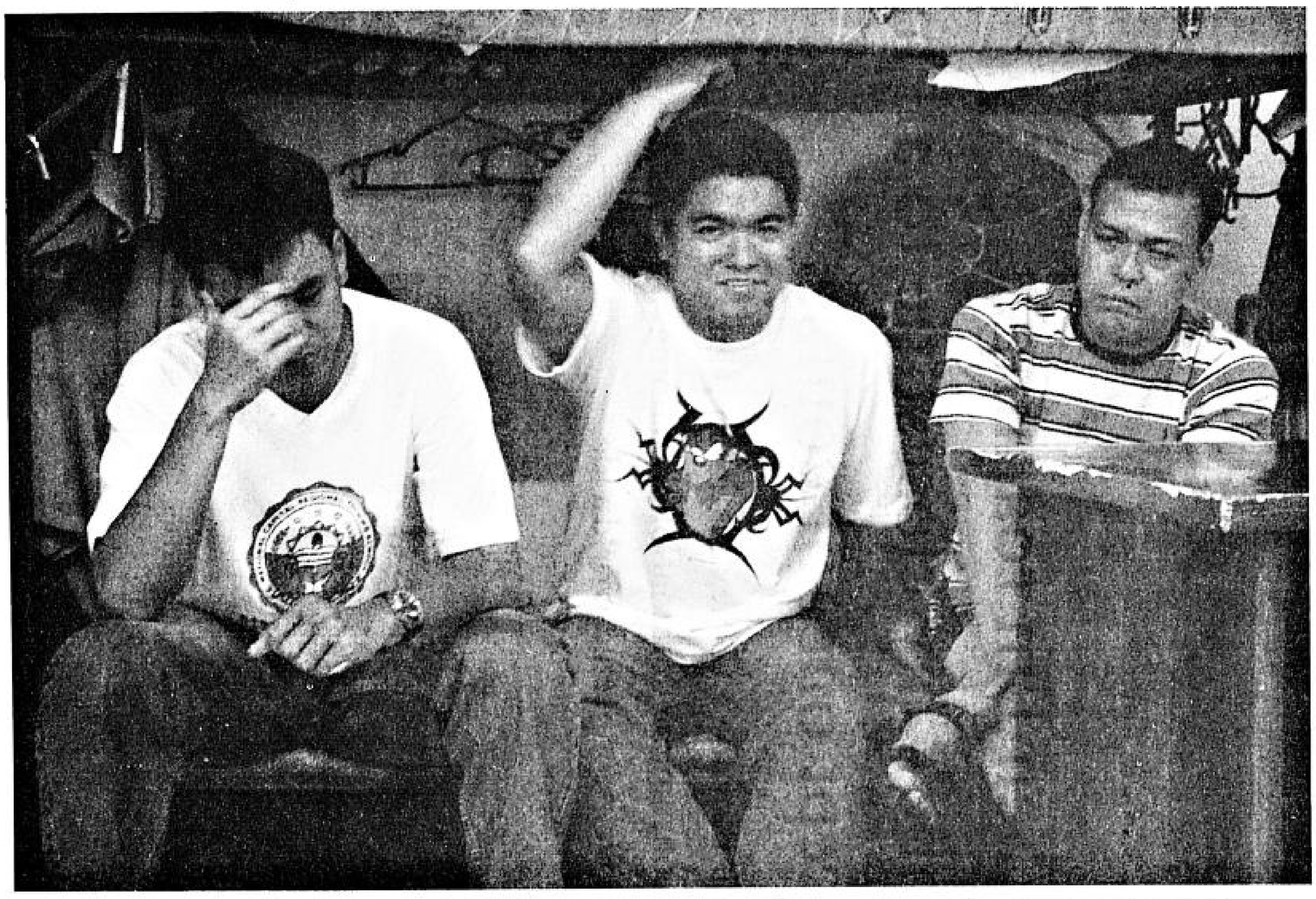
The errand boy later reportedly said that the three suspect-policemen told him to get the money.

Director Edgar Aglipay, AIDSOTF head, said he knew about the operation as early as Tuesday evening. "Someone asked us for help, saying Mandaluyong's antidrug officers were demanding money from her," he related.

Aside from Loret, the suspects also allegedly tried to extort P100,000 from the parents of Reynaldo Ebuya in exchange for dropping drug charges against him.

With the detention of the only officers authorized to conduct antidrug operations in the city, it remains to be seen what would become of the campaign against illegal drugs in Mandaluyong City.

With a report from TJ Burgonio



APPREHENDED for allegedly trying to extort P150,000 from two suspected drug offenders, policemen (from left) PO1 Salvador del Mundo, PO1 Jefferson Gonzales and SPO3 Rodel Castalone wait inside a detention facility in Camp Crame for a probe to start. VAL HANDUMON

Bebs Reyes makes it to 'most wanted' list

By Leila B. Salaverria

ONE OF the two suspects in the rape and murder of bank teller Candice Castro has made it to the list of the 10 most wanted persons in Manila.

Bebs Reyes, 23, the alleged mastermind in the case, has remained at large since the discovery of the crime on May 12.

The name of Reyes, son of Bureau of Immigration intelligence officer Benjamin Reyes, was included in the Western Police District's most-wanted list after a warrant for his arrest was issued on July 27.

The other suspect, Philippe Marcelo, has been arrested and detained a few days after Castro's naked body was found inside her unit at the Vellagio Tower in Malate, Manila.

The top ten list of Manila's most wanted for August came out this week and lists Reyes at number four.

"Reyes was included in the most wanted list because there is a warrant out for him and because of the nature of the crime he is accused of," said Supt. Co Yee Co, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit.

Rape and murder are heinous crimes.

Reyes earlier denied involvement in Castro's death, saying Marcelo lied in implicating him in the incident.

Marcelo had claimed that he only accompanied Reyes in going to Castro's unit and that once there, Reyes had been the one who attacked Castro.

Pro-life alliance seeks to block 2-child policy

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Tina Santos

BATTLE lines are ready to be drawn. And they will win.

Such confidence was in the air yesterday as eight congressmen forged an alliance with Manila Mayor Jose L. Atienza Jr. to combat a common enemy: the two-child proposal favored by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman.

"This is an alibi for failure. We haven't started working for the economy, so we are trying to do it the other way around," said Atienza, a staunch pro-life advocate, and chair of Pro-Life Philippines.

Lagman's Reproductive Health Act of 2004 seeks to encourage couples to have at most two children, with the promise of "incentives."

The bill is aimed at slowing down the annual population growth rate of 2.36 percent. There are 84 million Filipinos in the country, statistics show.

Manila Reps. Ernesto Nieva, Miles Roces, Rodolfo Bacani and Bienvenido Abante, Buhay Party-list Reps. Christian Seneres and Rene Velarde, Parañaque Rep. Ed Zialcita, and Cebu Rep. Simeon Kintanar vowed to fight Lagman's bill.

"There is reliable information that we have at least 50 congressmen who are openly pro-life. I believe that there are many more congressmen who would be against the two-child policy," said Kintanar, who proudly said he was the seventh among 12 siblings.

The 13th Congress has 236 members, including 24 party-list representatives.

Yesterday, the Quezon City government and the Commission on Population launched various activities aimed at strengthening the involvement of men in family planning, promoting the importance of responsible parenthood, and increasing the awareness of birth control acceptance.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte said there should be appropriate and timely information and access to all safe and effective methods of family planning to enable couples to make informed choices.

Teodorico Samuel, 40, a cigarette vendor, of Batasan Hills, Quezon City earns only P200 a day.

His wife Elisa, 34, finds it difficult to feed their seven children, whose ages range from 2 to 11.

Samuel said this was the reason why he decided to avail of the free no-scalpel vasectomy service at a local clinic.

"I think it's a good policy to limit the family according to their capability. Couples should realize that they can limit the number of their children without having any disruptions in the relationship," Belmonte told the INQUIRER.

The mayor had ordered the city health department to conduct massive information and education campaigns on various methods of family planning in the city's 142 barangay.

The city had already set aside funds for birth control devices like condoms that are widely distributed in health centers. There are also plans to allocate a budget for birth control pills and intrauterine devices.

Based on the 2000 census of the National Statistics Office, Quezon City has a total population of 2.17 million.

The figure is the highest in the country, and accounts for 22 percent of Metro Manila's population.

By 2005, the city's population is expected to reach the 2.39 million mark if the present birth rate is left unchecked.

Arturo Tolentino, a true senator

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

FORMER Sen. Arturo Tolentino will be sorely missed by his countrymen because he was a member of the Senate when the Senate was still the Senate.

Now, the once august body is composed mostly of nincompoops. The Senate is a joke foisted upon the people that deserve it anyway.

Where in the world can you find a legislative body where a mother and her son, who have mediocre intelligence, are both members? Where most of its members were elected because people want to be entertained by their antics instead of benefited by their intelligence?

Where once people were awed by the brilliance of its members, the Senate today is composed mostly of clowns wanting to be taken seriously. Of course, there are exceptions among its present crop.

We can only look back to those days when the likes of Tolentino and other intellectual giants matched wits on the Senate floor. Tolentino was among the last remaining members of that breed.

* * *

The prosecutor who told reporters that former Abu Sayyaf hostage Gracia Burnham cleared the military of collusion with the Abu Sayyaf should not go unpunished.

He should be yanked out of court duty and given a clerical job. While in that clerical job, he should be made to study English. He probably didn't understand what Gracia was saying during her testimony in court.

That should also apply to other prosecutors and judges. No speaka the English *sila kasi*.

* * *

Lesson learned in the Gracia Burnham testimony: the media should not be barred from covering significant events.

The judge wanted to avoid noise during the court hearing. But he didn't foresee the much louder noise that would come later.

Media should not be excluded from important events because they represent the people's right to know what's happening around them.

* * *

What's this I heard that maximum security prisoner Rey Yap, an ex-mayor of Misamis Occidental, was allowed to vote and campaign in his home province in the last election?

Yap was escorted by prison guards. His temporary release was allegedly based on a fake order from the Supreme Court.

The following prison officials allegedly facilitated Yap's release:

1. Angelito Moreno, legal officer of the Bureau of Corrections, who reportedly got the fake order from the Supreme Court.

2. Fajardo Lamangan, who prepared the release order.

3. Venancio Tesoro, superintendent of the National Bilibid Prisons, and retired Gen. Reveiro Albano, assistant director, who recommended the temporary release.

4. Prisons Director Dionisio Santiago, who approved the release.

Prisons insiders say Albano allegedly got a tongue-lashing from Santiago. The scolding was so severe, Albano tendered his irrevocable resignation.

The Department of Justice should investigate the report.

* * *

I still can't get over the booboo I made implicating a Citibank official, Gerry T. Santos, in a scam involving encashment of an alleged stolen check.

As I said in this corner last Saturday, I said I found out that the complainant, Marita Ragay Petitte, and her physician, Dr. Ricardo Carlos, were involved in the scam.

I called on the US Embassy to investigate the scam. I reiterate that call to investigate Petitte and Carlos.

The scam involved defrauding the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS) of the US government by falsifying medical records in the country. Petitte is a beneficiary of CHAMPUS since she claims to be married to Jack Petitte, a retired US serviceman.

But Jack Petitte called me up the other day to say that he and Marita have been divorced since September 2000. Because of their divorce, he said, Marita is no longer entitled to his medical benefits.

Jack Petitte confirmed my suspicion that Marita has been defrauding the US government, and is in cahoots with Dr. Carlos.

Former detainee says cop ordered 'salvage'

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has in its custody a witness who claimed to have heard a police official give the order to summarily execute Gilbert Garcia while the latter was detained at a Pasay City precinct.

Garcia's body, hidden in a sack, was found on July 30 in the possession of four Metro Manila policemen who were allegedly about to dump the body in Barangay Barandal, Calamba, Laguna.

The policemen were identified as PO1 Cenon Carolino of the Makati City police and PO2 Marcelino Taduyo, PO1 Ramil Marquita and PO1 Reynaldo Soronel of the Pasay City police.

NBI officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the witness, a jobless man from Pasay, came to the bureau three days ago because he was fearing for his life.

The witness told the NBI that he had spent a week detained at the Pasay Police Community Precinct No. 6, and Garcia was one of the other inmates.

According to the witness, he and several other men, including Garcia, were rounded up in connection with a robbery involving a policeman's friend.

Later, after apparently determining that Garcia was their suspect, a police chief inspector allegedly then told his men to finish off Garcia.

"*Ibiyahe na iyan* (Get rid of him)," NBI agents quoted the witness as saying, referring to street slang for killing someone.

The witness also claimed that before Garcia was taken away, he was mauled by several policemen.

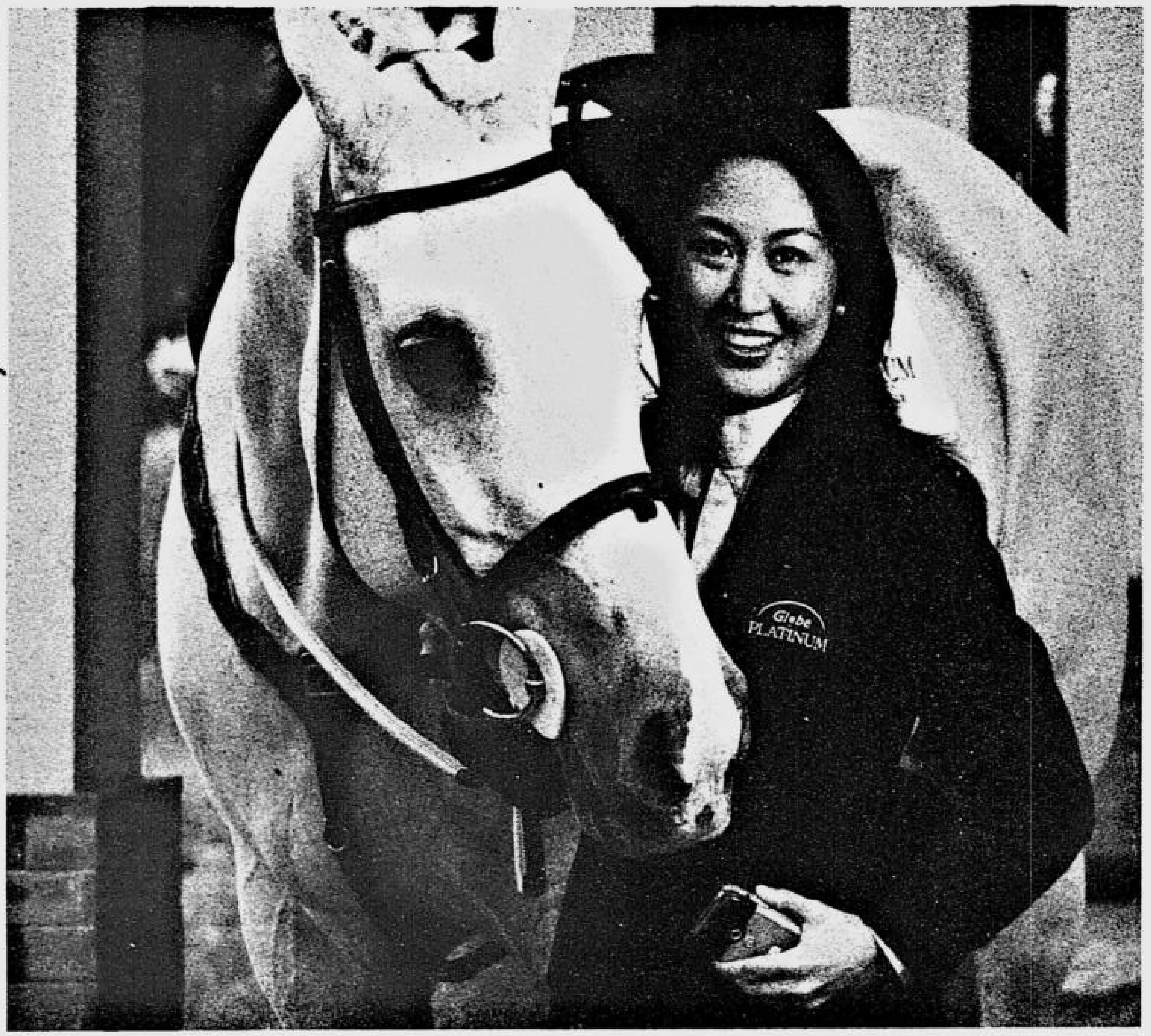
The witness said he saw the whole thing because he was still detained at that time. He was released the day the four lawmen were caught.

But NBI officials said yesterday that the bureau would still carefully scrutinize the statements of the witness before acting on the information.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

toni leviste

portrait #8Ⓖ



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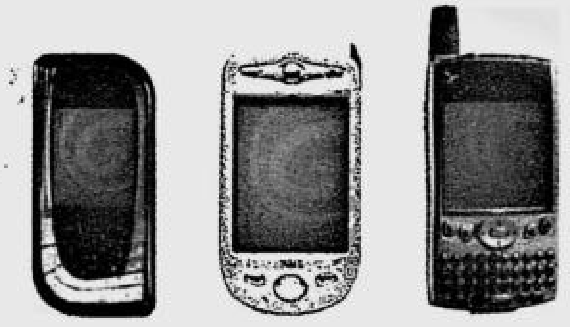

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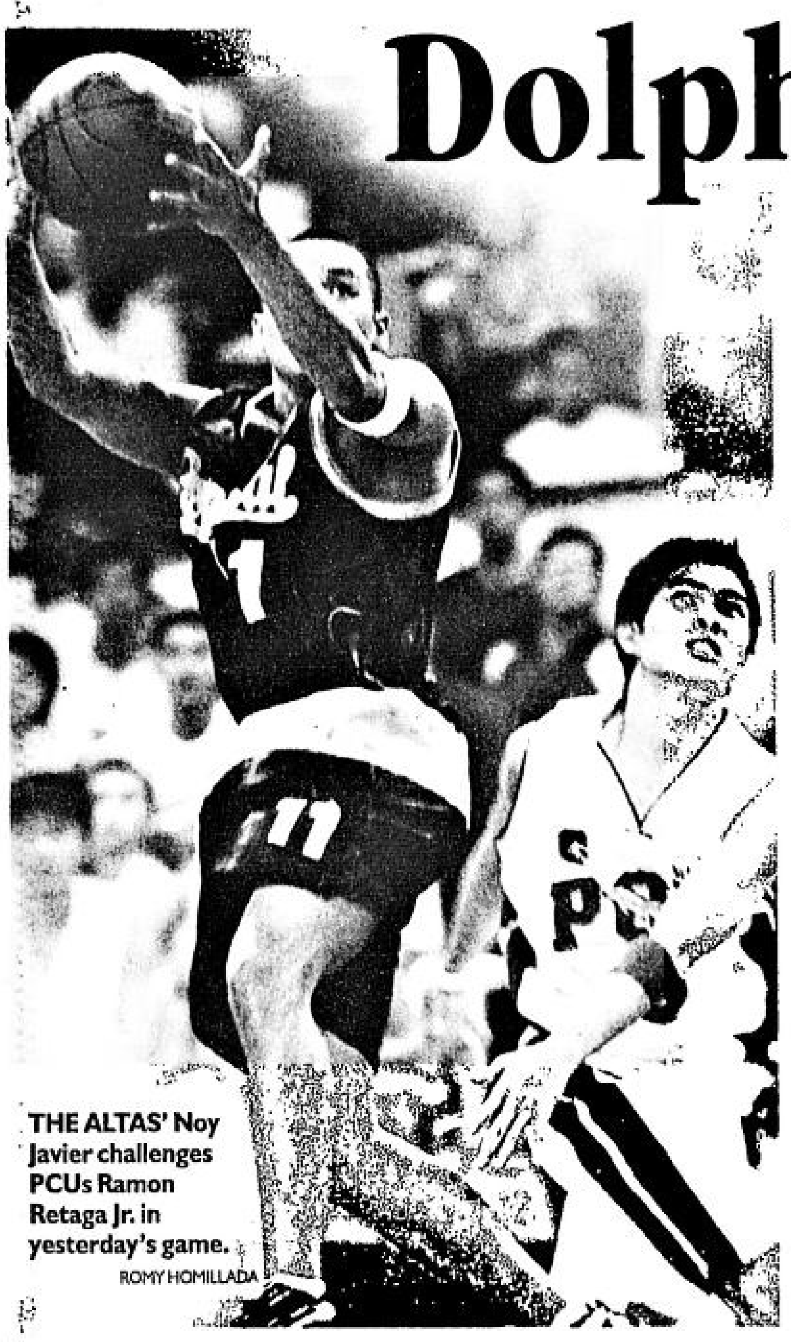


THE ALTAS' Noy Javier challenges PCUs Ramon Retaga Jr. in yesterday's game.
ROMY HOMILLADA

Dolphins, Lions stun rivals

GAMES TOMORROW *(Rizal Colseum)*
11:30 a.m.—JRU vs San Sebastian (Jrs)
*2 p.m.—JRU vs San Sebastian (Srs)
*4 p.m.—St. Benilde vs Letran (Srs)
6 p.m.—St. Benilde vs Letran (Jrs)
*Live on Studio 23

By Jasmine W. Payo

FIL-AM rookie Gabriel Espinas delivered a gutsy double-double performance as Philippine Christian University halted University of Perpetual Help's six-game winning streak, 71-62, yesterday at the start of the second round in the 80th NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

Espinas shot 14 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, sparking the Dolphins to the game's biggest lead at 42-28 early in the third quarter.

It was a veteran, though, who played big in the other senior matchup as fifth-year forward Arjun Cordero scored 19 points to lead the San Beda Red Lions past the Mapua Cardinals, 79-73.

Perpetual remained on top with a 6-2 slate, while Mapua kept solo second at 5-3. PCU and San Beda improved to 4-4.

PCU surprised Perpetual right from the tip-off, zoomed ahead, 10-0, and stayed on top for good.

At 73-73 in the final minute, San Beda rookie Yousif Aljamal Jr. drove for a 75-73 edge. Mapua's Christian Guevarra then missed on the other end, and a fastbreak layup from Alexander Angeles padded the lead, 77-73, 13 ticks remaining.

In junior play, James Mangahas scored 33 points for the Baby Dolphins as they trounced the Altalettes, 111-64, and took solo second with a 6-2 slate.

The scores:

SECOND GAME (Srs)

PCU 71—Castro 16, Gementiza 14, Espinas 14, Garrido 9, Sanz 8, Solis 7, Cunanan 3.

PERPETUAL 62—Javier 22, Bauzon 13, Joe 12, Cuenco 6, Misa 5, Bamson 2, Apor 2.

Quarters: 21-12, 32-25, 52-46, 71-62.

THIRD GAME (Srs)

SAN BEDA 79—Cordero 19, Aljamal 16, Bughao 13, Angeles 12, Bombeo 8, Arbole 7, Hudencial 2, Paterno 2, Maggay 0, Soriano 0, Cruz 0.

MAPUA 73—Migraso 16, Sta. Maria 10, Guevarra 9, Del Rosario 8, Co 8, Gonzales 7, Salud 6, Sumalinog 5, Tiongco 3, Veranga 1.

Quarters: 21-23, 46-42, 57-59, 79-73.

COUNTDOWN TO ATHENS

Jins may steal thunder from pugs

By Francis Ochoa

OLYMPIC hope has a little sibling. Three, actually.

Far from the liniment-scented boxing gym, where the slapping sounds of glove-coated jabs echo with the hope of that first-ever Olympic gold, Antoinette Rivero, Donald Geisler and Tshomlee Go frenetically charge at a cushioned teammate, striking him with kicks in rapid succession in a drill aimed to build up stamina.

In a corner, back bent and hands anchored on his knees, Korean coach Kim Tae Hyung watches, looking for a technical glitch in their form and hoping to adjust it early. He sees none, smiles and gives them a short break.

The country's national taekwondo team, pared to three by stringent Olympic qualifying tournaments in Bangkok and in France, is in the final stages of its training for Athens. Unlike past Olympics, though, Rivero, Geisler and Go won't be flying to the Olympics unburdened by the weight that has been dumped on the boxing team's shoulders since Anthony Villanueva won a silver in the Tokyo edition four decades ago.

ATHENS 2004

The taekwondo team now carries its share of that battered hope to end a gold drought, along with wild-card shooter Jethro Dionisio.

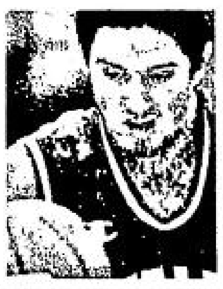
"It works both ways," said the 25-year-old Geisler. "There's little pressure because every time you compete in the Olympics, the thought is always on your mind that we haven't won a gold medal yet."

"But at the same time, it shows the faith that people have in us and that's good," he added.

Geisler is playing in his second Olympic games. Rivero and Go are in their first. The 16-

JINS/A19

WHAT'S INSIDE
- Italy crushes US squad /A19
- Taiwanese whip RP IX /A18



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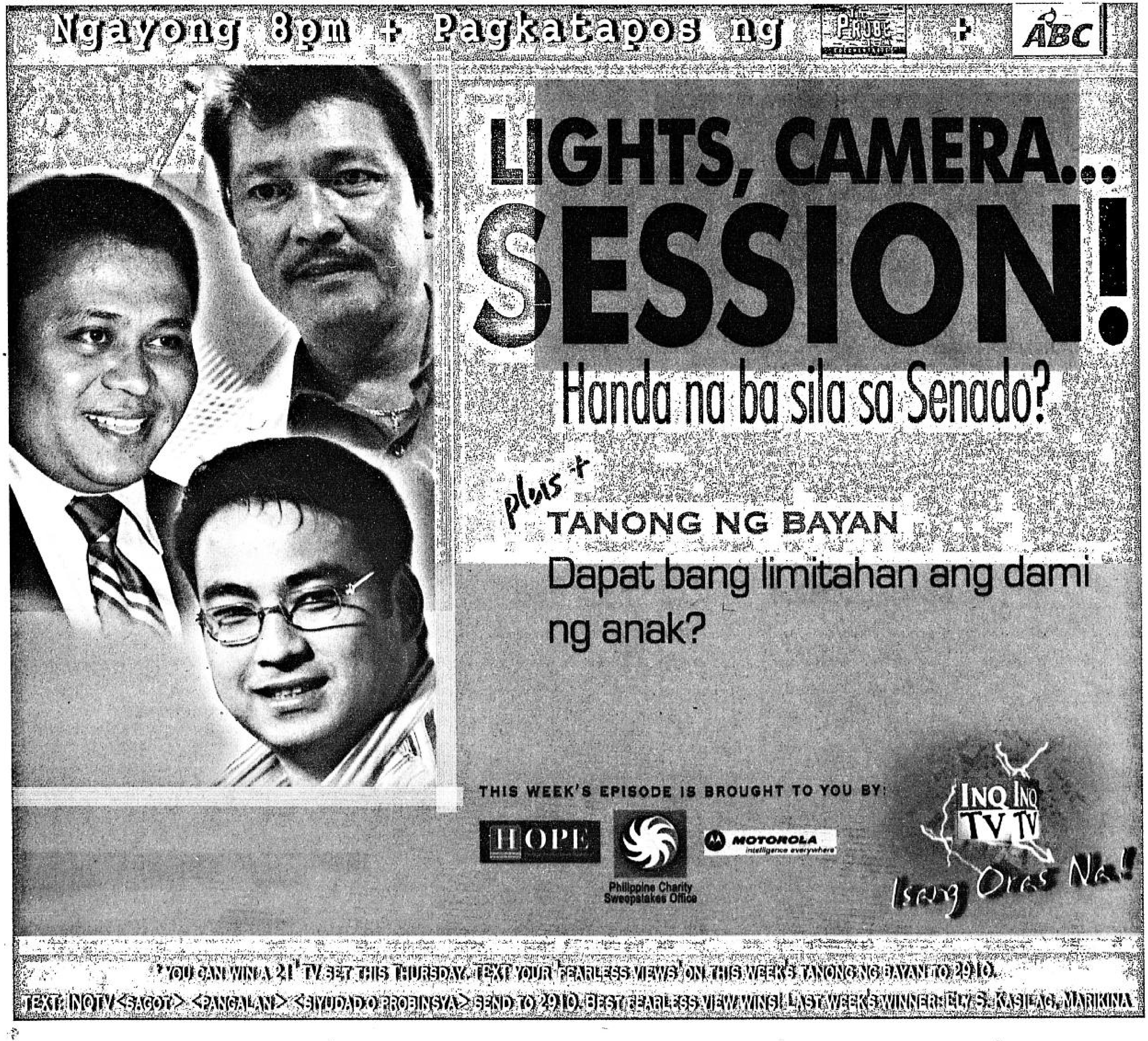

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Taekwondo tilt Aug. 7-8

MORE than 1,000 taekwondo jins from Metro Manila and the provinces will see action in the 27th Petron National Championships on August 7-8 at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

According to Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado, competition will be conducted in eight divisions, namely, senior men and women, junior men and women, mid-junior men and women and grade school boys and girls.

Participants will come from schools like DLSU, UST, UP, Ateneo, FEU, UE, ISM, San Beda, Don Bosco, LSQC and Letran, provincial chapters such as Baguio, Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Cebu, Pampanga, Laguna, Bacolod, Ilocos Norte, Isabela, Tuguegarao, General Santos, Butuan, Pangasinan and Zamboanga, and Armed Forces of the Philippines branches.

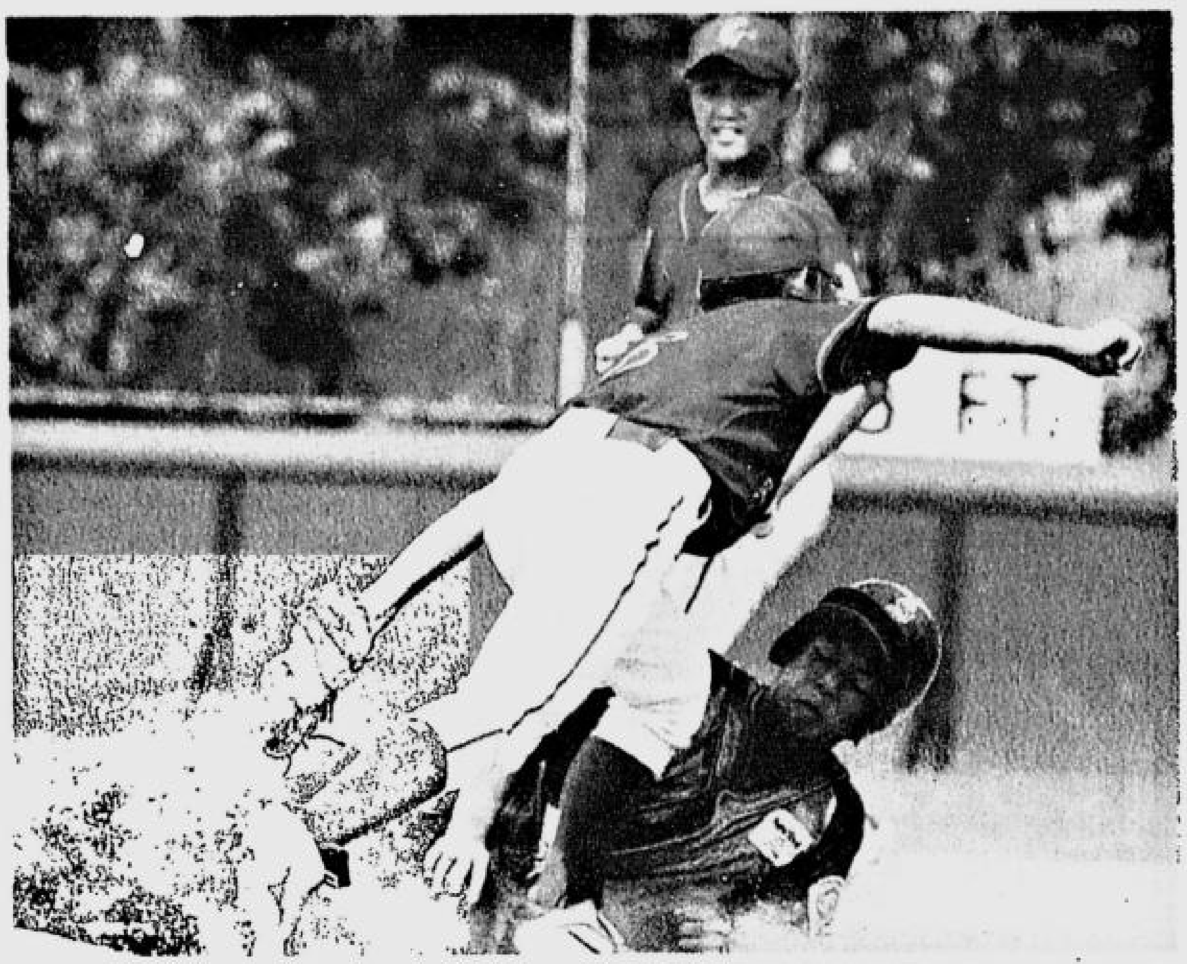
SLCUAA meet at UPH Dalta

SOUTHERN Luzon's best athletes will gather on Aug. 7 at the University of Perpetual Help Dalta System's Gymnasium in Calamba, Laguna to kick off Season 5 of the Southern Luzon Colleges and Universities Athletic Association (SLCUAA).

SLCUAA, one of the country's fastest rising collegiate leagues in terms of athletic excellence and student membership, is beginning its 5th season via its volleyball hostilities, with UPHDS-Molina eyeing a second straight crown.

League president Frank Viola of the St. Francis of Assisi College System-Bacoor Campus in Cavite revealed that after five fruitful seasons, their league is looking forward to a banner year with the addition of its 10th and 11th member schools AMA Computer College and La Salle-Dasmariñas Health and Science Campus.

Meanwhile, Gloria M. Alberto inducted into office other officers of the SLCUAA: Dr. Rey Dalde (chairman of the board), Ruel de Luna (vice president), Boy Sison (secretary and commissioner), Rosendo "Dong" Taguinod (treasurer), Mike Fudotan (auditor) and consultants Edgardo Cadlum and Charles Bates.



THE PHILIPPINES' Calma is tagged out by Chinese Taipei's Yu at second base yesterday. JESS YUSON

Taiwanese also whip hosts in 5

Musong R. Castillo

ACE Cheng Chi-Po was almost untouchable yesterday, surrendering just one hit in a 17-0 rout of the Philippines that assured Chinese-Taipei a place in the title game of the 30th Asia Pacific Zone Pony Baseball Tournament at the Rizal Diamond.

Cheng retired Filipino batters with ease and left fielder Wen Wang-Kai went 4-for-4 with three homeruns as the Taiwanese showed no mercy in winning for the second time in just five innings.

The Philippines took its second straight loss, counting a 0-19 whipping it got from another title contender, Japan, in the inaugurals on Tuesday.

The game but terribly undersized Filipinos have one assignment left, against Korea at 1 p.m. today, with the winner taking third place. The Koreans also have a 0-2 slate after bowing to the Japanese, 1-5, earlier.

Defending champion Taiwan and the Japanese clash in a no-bearing game at 10 a.m. today. The title match is scheduled at the same time tomorrow.

Team Philippines was able to actually put two boys on base as John Romulo Cordova provided RP's only base hit—a grounder that zipped past the first baseman—in the bottom of the third.

Reynaldo Calma also reached first in the fifth after being hit by a pitch in the hip. But he was picked off stealing second like Cordova two innings earlier.

All told, the Taiwanese pelted RP hurler John Bernardo Castro for 22 hits, 10 of them homers, as the visitors raced to an 11-0 lead with five runs in the first inning and six in the second frame.

GMA saves Olympic coverage

By Marc Anthony Reyes

IT'S GO for the TV coverage of Filipino athletes in the Athens Olympics.

After weeks of uncertainty, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday authorized the release of funds to pay NBN-4's arrears with the International Olympic Committee and clear the way for the government station's coverage of the 16 Filipinos seeing action in the Olympics set Aug. 13-29 in Greece.

NBN-4 chair Mia Concio said she's confident the country can come up on Monday with the $600,000 required by the IOC for the broadcast rights.

"I'm confident that we can come up with the money on Monday," said Concio after a meeting with Malacañang officials yesterday. "First things first, it was President Arroyo who saved the project."

A wire report yesterday quoted Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin as confirming the release of an initial $600,000 to pay half of NBN's $1.2 million arrears this week with the other half to be paid over a two-year period.

Boncodin added that the money will come from regular equity that the government is supposed to put into the station, but which it has held back in past budgetary allocations.

Concio said government agencies have started to pool their resources to make sure that the country gets the chance to watch the Olympics.

She said NBN has already acquired a loan from the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, which agreed to advance the $600,000 that will be paid on Monday.

The rest of arrears, according to Concio, will be paid within the next two years through the help of the DBM, Petron, PCSO, Land Bank, Development Bank of the Philippines and other private corporations.

FG executive council reps

THE PRESIDENT of the softball association and the First Gentleman Foundation project director for sports have been tapped to join the executive council of the "Medalyang Ginto, May Laban Tayo" program designed to lure private corporations in helping fund the Philippine team for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Former Manila Congressman Harry Angping, the Asaphil president, and Tessa Mangahas will represent the FG Foundation in the body that will primarily evaluate and decide on the endorsements of national sports associations for athletes-beneficiaries.

They will join Ramon Suzara and Ricky Lagoc of the Philippine Sports Commission Elite Athletes Development Office (EADO) and bowling chief Steve Hontiveros and rowing's Nestor Ilagan of the Philippine Olympic Committee in the council that will have a still unnamed sports mediaman as its last member.

CHEERDANCE CHAMPIONS
LA Gear, the fashionable lifestyle brand, is sponsoring the University of Santo Tomas Salinggawi Dance Troupe, UAAP's back-to-back cheerdance competition champions. The SDT is shown wearing LA Gear outfits and accessories in a halftime number in a recent UST game at the Araneta Coliseum.

Luzon football gains Red Ribbon support

LEO Arnaiz, brother of former basketball superstar Francis and president of the Baguio Football Association, and councilor Glen Caritativo, president of the Football Association of Tarlac met last weekend with event manager Ed Formoso and Red Ribbon Bakeshop's Tito Autor to map out opening-day festivities for the 2004 Red Ribbon Football Fiesta.

The bakeshop has thrown its full support behind the Philippine Football Federation's (PFF) provincial competition for kids 13-years-old and younger.

Set to kick off Aug. 14 in Davao, the annual tournament will be tapping Baguio and Tarlac and 28 other provinces as venues. Sponsor-partners are SuperFerry, Aboitiz Express, Adidas, Petron, Unicef and Pagcor.

GMA does a gold medal

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

WHO says GMA does not care about sports? Just because sports was not in her 10-point priority agenda in her last Sona does not mean she has forgotten about sports. No, that's farther from the truth.

I'm saying this in the wake of what GMA had just done: Order the immediate release of money to ensure that NBN will be in Athens to cover our 16 Olympians. She did that the other day, when almost everybody thought she had given up on NBN's bid to cover the Athens Olympics.

I understand that major details of the rescue operations would be divulged today in a 2 p.m. presscon at the Manila Hotel. Was I flattered that a top banana from the NBN, Bobby Arias, took some precious time to inform me about it.

Not for anything but I had known all along about efforts by the GMA government to save the NBN coverage of the Olympics. Through a team composed of no-nonsense persons within the inner factotum of Malacañang Palace, I got regular briefings about the "Save the Athens Coverage" movement almost every hour, every day.

The day GMA ordered the release of some $225,000 to start the ball rolling last week insofar as reopening negotiations with the International Olympic Committee was concerned, I knew her opening salvo would produce results. It was just a matter of time before it could be consummated.

The other night, Mama Mia Concio, the NBN chair, was on the phone. Actually, before I could say "hello" to acknowledge her call, I smelled something sweet: She'd break the biggest sporting news of the week.

"Guess what?" Mama Mia said. "We are almost there."

She said GMA would not stop until the impasse with IOC is resolved.

"I wouldn't want to jump the gun on our President," said Mama Mia. "But I'm calling you now because, as always, I want you to be the first to know when something good happens about our bid to save the coverage of the Olympics. Just now, something very, very good happened."

This night, Mama Mia's voice was the happiest sounding voice on earth.

"An announcement would soon be made about the NBN coverage of the Athens Olympics," she said. "Our President would be in the forefront of things and I wouldn't want to pre-empt her final decision."

When I read in the papers yesterday about GMA giving strict orders to save the NBN coverage of the Olympiad, I felt extremely relieved. I'm sure you, too, my dear readers. Reading between the lines of yesterday's reports, it would be safe to assume GMA had said yes to NBN's coverage of the Athens Olympics.

As you must have noticed in the not too distant past, I had been very vocal here about our government's seeming indifference in throwing support behind Mama Mia's rescue operations of NBN's coverage of the Olympiad.

Thank God, it now seems our crusade will bear fruit.

I'm so ecstatic about these positive developments not only because GMA had proved again that she cared about the feelings of sports fans but also because, yes, Press Secretary Milton "Mr. Iceman" Alingod proved to me once more that, yes, he is a man of his words:

This, I have got to confess.

In the heat of discussions about NBN's seemingly hopeless bid to save the coverage of the Olympiad, Mr. Alingod gave me a ring to say, "Please be at peace my friend. I'll do everything I can to save the situation."

I asked him, "How many percent sure are you, Mr. Secretary, that you can help save it?"

"I'm not promising you anything but I'll do my damnedest," he said.

Yesterday, Mr. Iceman was in the papers as one of the main characters in pushing for the NBN bid to cover the Olympics. It would appear that, yes, he was the top gun all this time in the government's efforts to save the coverage. Of course, it cannot be denied, too, that Rep. Monico "Nyoks" Puentevella had a leading role in the mission.

Through it all, I must tip my hat to GMA, Mama Mia, Nyoks and Mr. Iceman for proving to us that in their hearts still lie a genuine concern for sports. Now, even before this afternoon's formal announcement of NBN's presence in Athens could be made, we can now proudly say we are truly a part of the Olympic family, one with the 202 other nations competing on Aug. 13-29 in the birthplace of the Olympiad.

Here's a glass to the spirit of Olympism, which GMA had just lent a new meaning.

SPORTSWATCH

Bibat on target for Putra Cup slot

MICHAEL Bibat struggled with a 75 yesterday but remained on target for the lone slot in the national squad as his rivals also wavered in the second day of the Putra Cup qualifier at the Langer Course of the Riviera golf complex in Silang, Cavite. Bibat posted a 36-hole aggregate of 147 heading into the final two days of the tournament that will select the last player to the RP team competing in the Aug. 24-27 event. Seeded players are Juvic Pagunsan, Marvin Dumandan and Jun Bernis.

Nietes TKO'S Indon champ

DONNIE "Ahas" Nietes, the country's No. 1 miniflyweight, raised his unbeaten streak to 10 by stopping Indonesian champion Martin Polii in the seventh round of their scheduled 10-rounder at the RCTI TV Station in Jakarta, Indonesia, recently. Nietes survived a cut in the third round caused by an accidental headbutt then virtually rained blows on the hapless Indon, who called it quits at the 2:15 mark of the seventh. "It was Nietes' fight all the way,"said the Filipino's manager Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani, who was at ringside during the bout. It was the sixth short-route win for the Cebu-based Ilonggo. *Salven Lagumbay*

Echavez NBC player of the month

FORMER Purefoods point guard Egay Echavez is the "player of the month" for July in the ongoing NBC (National Basketball Conference) national championship. The 5-foot-7 Ozamiz Cotta stalwart nosed out teammate Rollie Basilides, Tribu Sugbu's Chico Lanete and Laguna Spring's Robin Mendoza for the monthly award in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Spring Cooking Oil, PCSO, Cebu Ferries, Air Philippines, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Supercat, Accel and Molten. The lefty Echavez averaged 12.5 points on 45 percent shooting from the field, 2.75 rebounds, 4.5 assists and two steals in a four-game stretch during which the Cotta bounced back from 0-2 to level their record at 3-3.

Team Cebu City learns from ICG

THE PARTICIPATION of Team Cebu City in the just-concluded International Children's Games was a learning experience not only in the competition side but in the organizational aspect as well. Jonathan Guardo, chair of the Cebu City Sports Commission, who headed the delegation, said the Ohio joust served as perfect venue to get fresh ideas and be apprised of new technologies that Cebu could use when it plays provincial host to the Southeast Asian Games next year. "We're proud to have joined the Children's Games for the first time. We have learned a lot from the trip. It has given us fresh concept in hosting a successful event," said Guardo. Cebu City will host at least six events in the 2005 SEA Games. Accompanying Guardo were councilor Jack Jakosalem, chair of the City Council's Committee on Games, Amusements and Professional Sports, CCSC commissioner Rolly Diorico and executive director Allan Torrevillas.

Bancod shares lead after Round 2

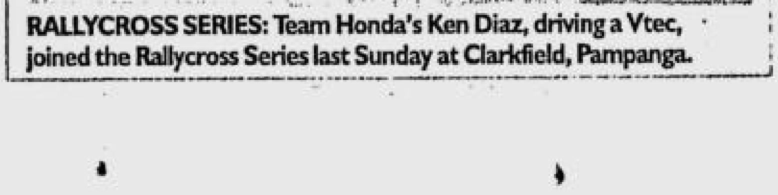
FILIPINO International Master Ronald Bancod defeated Grandmaster Miroljub Lazic of Yugoslavia and gained a tie for 1st to 16th places in the XI Nice International Open Chess Tournament Tuesday night at the Grand Aston Hotel in Nice, France. With his second win in as many starts, Bancod matched the output of defending champion GM Davor Komljenovic and compatriot IM Yves Rañola, who outplayed Guillame Gras of France. GM-candidate Mark Paragua and NM Rolando Nolte drew their marches and were at 1.5 points. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

UCAA basketball begins today

THE THIRD season of the Universities and Colleges Athletics Association (UCAA) basketball tournament starts today at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum with Manila Mayor Lito Atienza as guest of honor. Defending champion St. Francis of Assisi battles PSBA at 11:30 a.m., while EAC tests La Salle-Dasmariñas at 10 a.m. La Salle-Manila plays Colegio de San Lorenzo at 1 p.m. before Olivarez College and National College of Business and Arts collide in the last game at 2:30 p.m.

Pahabol sa Taglugon 4-cocker

BIG-TIME cockers and breeders will converge today at the Cavite Coliseum and Derby Center (Bacoor, Cavite), when the 17th Season Pahabol sa Taglugon 4-Cock Derby gets under way at 4 p.m. The event is being hosted by sportsman Bobbit Ples of Rabatitat entry. Participants include former World champions William Co and Jun Marasigan, 2004 World Slasher Cup champions Lito Orillaza and Rudy Salud, Richard Bates, engineer Tony Marfori, Pol Estrellado, Tony Faustino, Eric de la Rosa, Bobby Seelin, Nestor Alcala and Carding Ng. For details, call 0916-5055126 (Jun-jun), 046-9709971 (Nani) or 046-5021484 (Dado).



RALLYCROSS SERIES: Team Honda's Ken Diaz, driving a Vtec, joined the Rallycross Series last Sunday at Clarkfield, Pampanga.

Repentant Magahin admits using drugs

IN near tears, disgraced former world boxing boss William Magahin of Iloilo City has admitted to World Boxing Foundation (WBF) president Mick Croucher that he used drugs.

"Yes, sir, I used drugs," the 34-year-old Magahin told Croucher, who visited him at the Quezon City jail on Aug. 2. "But I promise I won't use drugs again if given the chance," he added, raising his right hand.

The Melbourne-based Croucher then hugged Magahin like a long lost son in front of the jail warden, Supt. James Labordo and Senior Jail Officer Elizabeth Regacho.

"I want you to become great again. I came to help you," said Croucher, who dug into his own pockets to produce bail money for Magahin's temporary freedom.

Magahin was set to be released yesterday but he was still in jail as of 4 p.m.

Fe Sumandal, a social worker sent by Quezon city administrator Paquito Ochoa Jr. to witness the meeting, shed tears. "*Parang pelikula. Nakakaawa siya* (It was like a movie; I pity Magahin)."

Croucher wants Magahin to undergo a drug rehabilitation but Labordo said his office could not recommend it because the ex-champion was charged with robbery-holdup.

Croucher added that he was willing to shoulder the rehabilitation of Magahin for six months at P30,000 per month, which, he claimed, "is better than paying P100,000 in cash for his bail."

Ochoa had advised Croucher earlier to consider a private rehab center for Magahin "because our public rehab centers are in a sorry state."

The bail was set at P100,000, but was lowered to P50,000. Croucher paid the premium of P14,000 through a surety bond.

Croucher, a multimillionaire, said he helped Magahin "because I cannot bring my money to heaven."

Meanwhile, Magahin's foster father Roland arrived in Manila last Aug. 3 to make sure the boxer would go to a rehabilitation center after his release. *Alex P. Vidal, PNS*

STREAK OVER

Roger Federer slumps at the final point of a 1-6, 7-6, 6-4 loss to Slovakian Dominik Hrbaty. A victory by Federer would have tied Pete Sampras' 24-game winning streak in 1999. AP

BASKETBALL SHOCKER

Italians crush US squad

COLOGNE, Germany—The US men's basketball team dazzled a big crowd in Germany with spectacular dunks and gravity-defying drives to the basket during pre-game warm-up drills against Italy.

But by the end of Tuesday's exhibition match, Italy's stunning 95-78 win had shattered any aura of US invincibility and raised the prospect of a wide open Olympic tournament for the first time in decades.

The worst defeat since NBA players joined the US team in 1992 exposed a lack of cohesion against rapidly improving international teams that practice and compete together for years.

"I think anybody in our country who watches the game around the world realized it (standards) has greatly improved," said US coach Larry Brown, dismissing any suggestion he and his team failed to take Italy or international teams seriously enough.

"They play the right way," he said of the Italian side after the match in Cologne, a stopover before Athens. "They played as a team at both ends of the court. We have a lot of lessons to learn." The Americans, on the other hand, looked lost and without ideas at times. They shot a poor 55 percent from the free throw line (16 for 29) versus Italy's 81 percent. The US hit only four of 13 three-point shots compared with 15 for 35 for Italy.

They also seemed uncomfortable with the slightly different international rules. Their traveling violations, errant passes, and unimaginative offense stood in contrast to the fluent, altruistic game of the older and more experienced Italians.

The superior athleticism of the US side wasn't enough. *Reuters*

ITALIA
LOTTO
USA

ITALIAN Alex Righetti holds his own against US superstar Tim Duncan in this loose ball battle. AP

Ateneo takes another shot at 6-0 start

STANDINGS	W	L
Ateneo	5	0
FEU	4	1
La Salle	4	2
Adamson	3	3
UE	3	3
UST	3	3
NU	0	5
UP	0	5

GAMES TODAY
(Philsports Arena)
9:30 a.m.—NU vs UST (Jrs)
11:30 a.m.—Adamson vs Ateneo (Jrs)
1:30 p.m.—Ateneo vs NU (Srs)
*4 p.m.—FEU vs UP (Srs)
6 p.m.—UP vs UE (Jrs)
*Live on Studio 23

VERY few players from the current Ateneo squad remember how it was 16 years ago when that batch of Eagles raced to a 6-0 start.

This season's Eagles were toddlers when that happened, Aug. 10, 1988 to be exact, and coach Sandy Arespacochaga still hadn't suited up for his alma mater in the senior tournament.

But today, the current Eagles have a shot at that streak as they gun for their sixth straight win in the UAAP. varsity basketball tournament against the bleeding National University Bulldogs.

The Eagles meet the Bulldogs at 1:30 p.m. today at the Philsports Arena.

The Bulldogs, though winless in five games, came close to shocking defending champion Far Eastern, which won, 86-85, in overtime last Saturday. A controversial call, which led to the suspension of the referee who blew the whistle, stifled NU and possibly made the Bulldogs even hungrier for a win today.

Ateneo, which is rallying behind injured captain Larry Fonacier, is coming off a thrilling 58-55 victory over Adamson. Playmaker LA Tenorio's three-pointer with 4.3 seconds left kept the Eagles' immaculate record.

FEU, amid rumors that all is not well between the coaching staff and certain school officials, collides with University of the Philippines in the other varsity match at 4 p.m.

The Maroons, just like the Bulldogs, are itching for a win after a one-point heartbreak against La Salle, 69-68, last Sunday.

The Tiger Cubs are also gunning for a sixth consecutive win in junior play when they kick off the five-game bill against the Bullpups at 9:30 a.m. A rematch between last year's finalists, the defending champs Eaglets and Baby Falcons, follows at 11:30 a.m . The Junior Maroons and UE Pages wrap up the day's sked at 6 p.m. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Jins may steal thunder from pugs

From page A17

year-old Rivero, excited at the prospect of enshrining her name in the elite list of Olympians, is brimming with unbridled teenage optimism.

"I believe I have a chance of winning. I got to see my opponents when we trained in Korea and I think I have a chance against them," said Rivero, a gold medalist in the Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam, where she competed in the featherweight class.

If there's anybody who has seen how far he could go, it is Go. The gung-ho jin placed third in the world championships in France, against a field that, Geisler believes, was made up of some of the top bets for Athens. The dusky Go believes his performance there is a good enough gauge of his medal chances in the 58-kg and under division.

"I'm excited," said the 23-year-old jin in Filipino, with an obvious attempt to rein in his exuberance. "But I don't want to think about the gold medal yet because I want to keep my focus on my training."

Like boxing, taekwondo competitions are weight-classified, giving no country an edge over the other as far as physical attributes are concerned. This is the reason why boxing is the top gold hope. And why taekwondo is its little sidekick.

"It will all boil down to training and technique," explained Go.

But despite the seeming parity measured kilograms bring to the sport, the favorites are still aplenty.

"Of course, there's Korea," said Rivero. The country that is the birthplace of the sport is also the cradle of its best athletes and coaches, thus the reason why the national team trained for two months there. "But you also have to add the European countries, Spain and Italy."

Geisler, a light welterweight, says fate will also play a significant role in the Philippines' campaign.

"Things will be a lot easier if we get a favorable draw," he explained.

Still, in shooting for the gold, the three jins will have to cross paths with the best in the world. They've done their part to prepare for that moment, flying overseas to train, surviving agonizing rounds of qualifying matches, and then going hard at practice thrice a day with a little over a month left before the Olympics.

The other half of the deal reels off in Athens. Go takes first crack on Aug. 26 while Geisler and Rivero debut two days later.

If fate, indeed, shuffles the deck well and deals them a good card, the jins may just end up beating big brother boxing for that first ever Olympic gold medal.

Team PBL opens vs host

DOHA, Qatar—Met by soaring temperatures hitting the mid-40s, Team PBL arrived here hoping that "speed and shooting" will help cover up its height deficiency when it opens its bid in the second Qatar International Group Championships against the host country today at the Khalifa Gym.

"This is actually a breakthrough for the league," said commissioner Chino Trinidad. "We have not been invited to play abroad for quite a long time already so we did not pass up on this opportunity. They (organizers) believe in our program that's why we were invited."

The team is made up of 14 players culled from PBL squads.

"It is crucial that we scout our opponents well," said head coach Junel Baculi. "We will have to rely on our speed, team defense and outside shooting to do well."

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Dine at Dusit Hotel Nikko this August

VISIT Dusit Hotel Nikko this August and enjoy its spread of delectable food offerings.

Tired of the usual buffet? Then try The Café's Theme Buffet and go crazy over these mouth-watering dishes. Everyday, the buffet highlights a particular country by featuring its popular dishes. On the spotlight this month are Chinese, Peruvian, Asian, Mexican, Spanish and Mediterranean cuisine available for lunch and dinner from Aug. 1 to 31. You can also experience "A la Minute Cooking" every Sunday where diners get to choose from a variety of fresh seafood and meats and have them cooked the way their tummy desires. This is available for lunch and dinner starting Aug. 15.

If you have a passion for seafood, then indulge yourself with one of the delectable bounties of the sea…Hatta (lapu-lapu fish) at Dusit Hotel Nikko's Benkay Japanese Restaurant. From Aug. 9 to 28, feast on the restaurant's set menu called Hatta Kaiseki at P1,200 per person. Delight your palate with Lapu-Lapu Skin with Ponzu Sauce, Slices of Fresh Lapu-Lapu with essence of Japanese Kelp served with Prawn Sauce, Lapu-Lapu Sea Urchin cooked with Vegetables and Egg in Soy Sauce and many more.

Have a taste of "Lotsa' Noodles" at Dusit Hotel Nikko's Benjarong Royal Thai Restaurant. Choose from among the five ala carte dishes that are imported from Thailand to give you the authentic Thai noodle—one of the well-loved dishes of the Thai's. Available for Lunch and Dinner, enjoy "Lotsa' Noodles" from Aug. 15 to 30.

Take the gastronomic journey to Vietnam as Thien Duong Restaurant features three of its region in a three-part food festival series. For its initial feature, Hanoi's 10 best dishes will be offered ala-carte for lunch and dinner from Aug. 16 to Sept. 15. Hanoi boasts hundreds of delicacies which have a seasonal character; sophisticated and selective in their specialties.

Grab a bite and sample an array of "merienda" favorites like Dinuguan with Puto, La Paz Batchoy, Adobo Sandwich and other heartwarming soul foods Filipinos are famous for. Available daily starting Aug 1, it is also offered at Fiesta San Miguel.

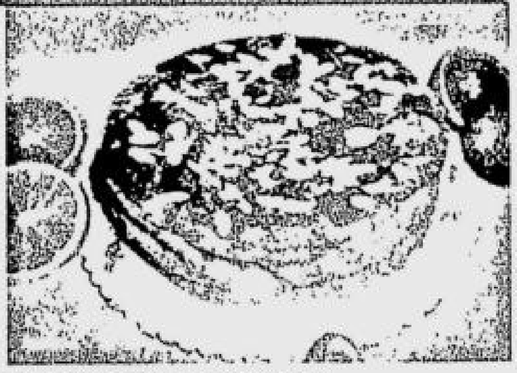
For queries or reservations, call Dusit Hotel Nikko at 867-3333.

A Weekend Getaway at InterContinental Manila

LOOKING for a place to get away from it all? Spend a relaxing and delightful weekend right at the heart of Makati City. InterContinental Manila offers Family and Lifestyle Weekend Options for only P 4,000++ on weekends (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) from Aug. 1 to Oct. 31. Take your pick from two overnight Deluxe Room packages created to suit your personal needs as well as the family's. For bonding time with the kids, the Family Weekend Option includes a choice of buffet breakfast or lunch for two at Café Jeepney plus 10-percent discount on additional buffets and 50 percent off for children below 12 years old, complimentary drinks and cake at the poolside, complimentary Timezone Powercards and free access to Clark Hatch Fitness Center. If you wish to spend some time pampering yourself, the Lifestyle Weekend Option offers buffet breakfast for two at Café Jeepney, a complimentary relaxing foot massage and body massage therapy at the Suriya Spa at InterContinental Manila, 50-percent discount on additional massage therapy or traditional body spa treatments at the Suriya Spa at InterContinental Manila, a complimentary bottle of wine when dining with three other guests at the Prince Albert Rotisserie, 10-percent discount on private dining and food and drinks at Le Boulevardier, and a bath and body gift pack from Essenses. Additional discounts are available for those booking for two nights or two rooms. For inquiries or reservations, call 815-9711.

Waterfront Airport Hotel and Casino Mactan's August indulgence

COCKTAIL OF THE MONTH
MANGO TWIST
Feel the great twist of this amazing concoction of mango puree, 'lambanog' and American lemon sure to spice up your day. Available at P180 net per glass on outlets and P200 net per glass on room service, it's available for the whole month of August.



CAKE OF THE MONTH
SICILIAN ORANGE ALMOND CAKE
Enjoy every bite of this orange cake decked with almond flakes. Light yet very tempting, full orange flavor and the nutty flavor of freshly roasted almonds, it's P800 net for the whole cake and P80 net per slice, and is available for the whole month at the Lobby Lounge and all the outlets.

Pleasure trip to HK

EXECUTIVES of Palm Plaza Hotel and The Executive Plaza Hotel recently made a pleasure trip to Hong Kong. This is part of the incentive program given by The Palm Hotels to its employees who made great contributions to the company. Places they have visited include Shenzhen, China; Ocean Park; Luo Market and Tong Luo Bay. Participants are Shaouie Olpindo, Palm Plaza Hotel senior account manager; Barbie Canlas, Palm Plaza Hotel sales manager; Rhesa Coloma, Palm Plaza Hotel account manager and Ninnette Soliman, The Executive Plaza Hotel sales manager.

Bridal arts

THE NEW World Renaissance Hotel honors Philippine culture and heritage in the hotel's bridal fair this year called "A Renaissance Wedding: Tribute to the Filipina Bride." From Aug. 9 to 15, an awe-inspiring exhibit of majestic Filipinana bridal gowns and arts will be held at the hotel lobby.

Over 50 of the most exquisite wedding/event finery, products and service suppliers will also be on display on Aug. 14 and 15, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Grand Ballroom. This collection of suppliers will serve as a "one-stop-shop" for couples and party organizers, which includes flower shops, photo and video services, specialty cakes and designers among others.

The highlight of the bridal fair is the invitational Gala Fashion Show on Aug. 14, 6:30 p.m. at the main lobby. Featured designer is Patis Tesoro, who has made her mark in the local fashion industry by specializing and promoting Filipiniana wear and materials. Aside from exhibiting bridal gowns, the fashion show will also feature modern Filipiniana-inspired formal wear. Special invited guest models will walk the ramp during the fashion Gala.

An afternoon fashion show follows on Aug. 15, 5 p.m. at the main lobby, which will feature the innovative Filipiniana designs of in-demand new couturiers. This is open to the public.

For more information, call 811-6888.

HBO's 'Sex & the City' glamour at The Bellevue Hotel

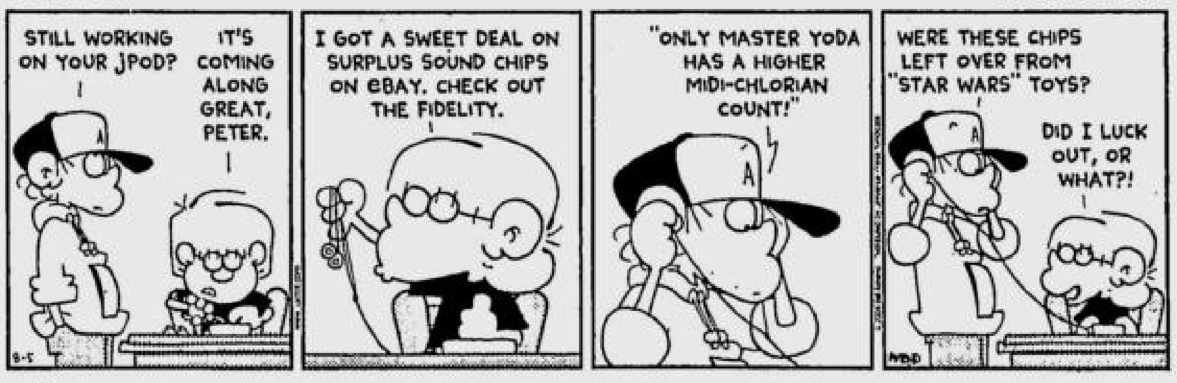
THE BELLEVUE Hotel captures the free spirit of HBO's "Sex & the City" with Carrie, Miranda, Samantha and Charlotte in "Sex and the City: A Final Toast," a fashion extravaganza for Alabang's Finest members and Asian Vision Cable Holdings (AVCH) subscribers this Aug. 14 at The Bellevue's 20/20 Bar and Entertainment Center.

The Bellevue Hotel, together with event partners AVCH, HBO and Rustan's, presents this truly exciting affair themed after the celebrated HBO series. Highlights of the much-awaited event include a special advance screening of HBO's "Sex & The City" Season 6, private viewing of Rustan's premier brands and a fashion presentation inspired by the styles and personalities of the fabulous foursome.

HBO's "Sex and the City: A Final Toast" will be hosted by premier party host Johnny Litton, together with beauty expert Chechel Joson. Choice prizes will be given away to attendees in the raffle, fun games and a "Sex & the City" look-alike contest, as well as luxury gift items for guests. With its exciting events, The Bellevue Hotel urges guests to "Make it Alabang. Make it The Bellevue." Call 771-8181 for inquiries.

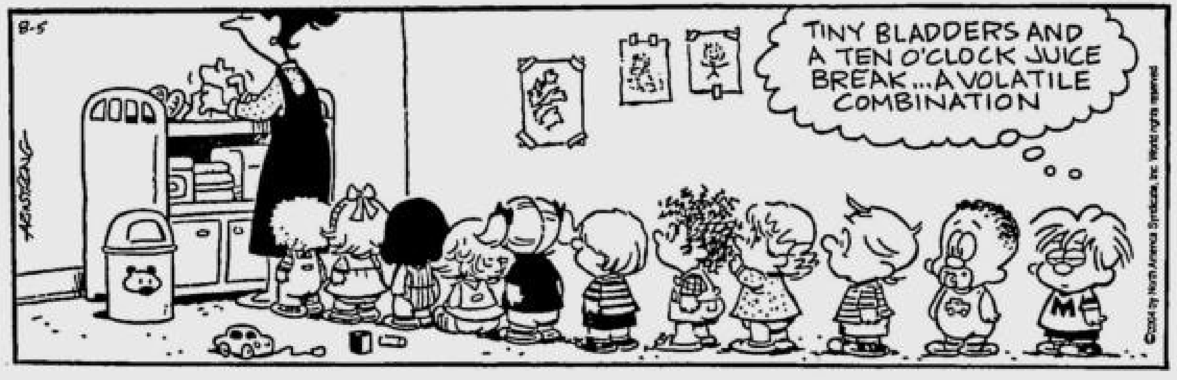
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


STILL WORKING ON YOUR JPOD?
IT'S COMING ALONG GREAT, PETER.
I GOT A SWEET DEAL ON SURPLUS SOUND CHIPS ON EBAY. CHECK OUT THE FIDELITY.
"ONLY MASTER YODA HAS A HIGHER MIDI-CHLORIAN COUNT!"
WERE THESE CHIPS LEFT OVER FROM "STAR WARS" TOYS?
DID I LUCK OUT, OR WHAT?!
8-5

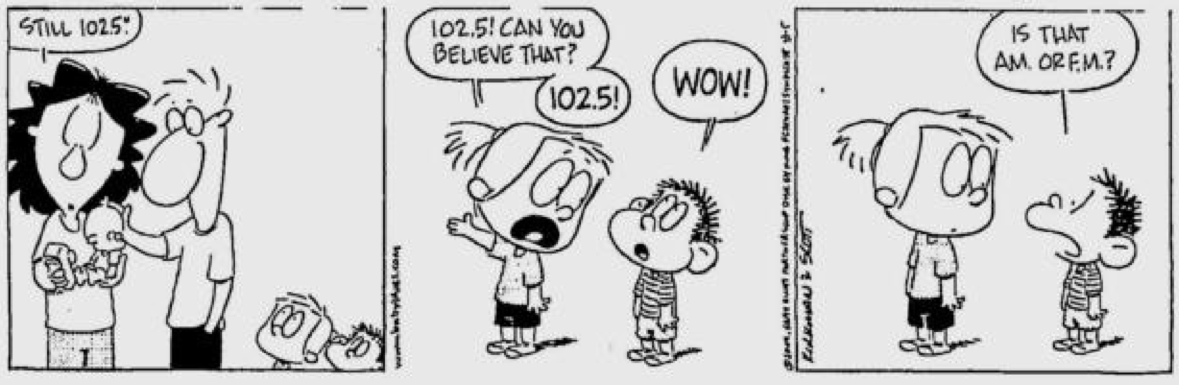
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


8-5
TINY BLADDERS AND A TEN O'CLOCK JUICE BREAK...A VOLATILE COMBINATION

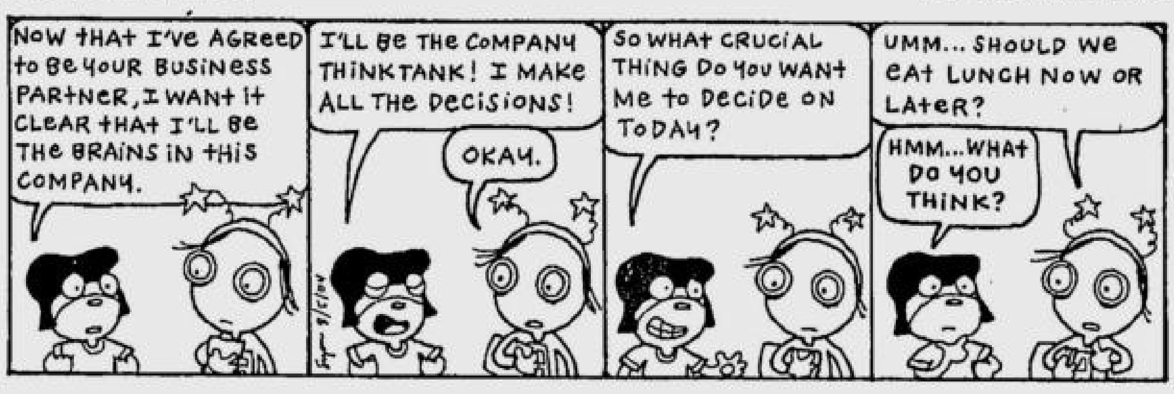
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


STILL 102.5°.
102.5! CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?
102.5!
WOW!
IS THAT AM. OR F.M.?

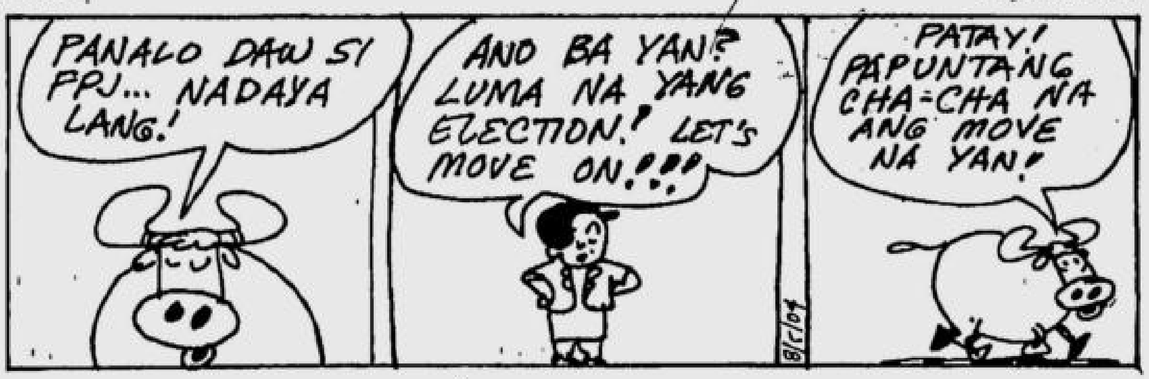
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


NOW THAT I'VE AGREED TO BE YOUR BUSINESS PARTNER, I WANT IT CLEAR THAT I'LL BE THE BRAINS IN THIS COMPANY.
I'LL BE THE COMPANY THINKTANK! I MAKE ALL THE DECISIONS!
OKAY.
SO WHAT CRUCIAL THING DO YOU WANT ME TO DECIDE ON TODAY?
UMM... SHOULD WE EAT LUNCH NOW OR LATER?
HMM...WHAT DO YOU THINK?

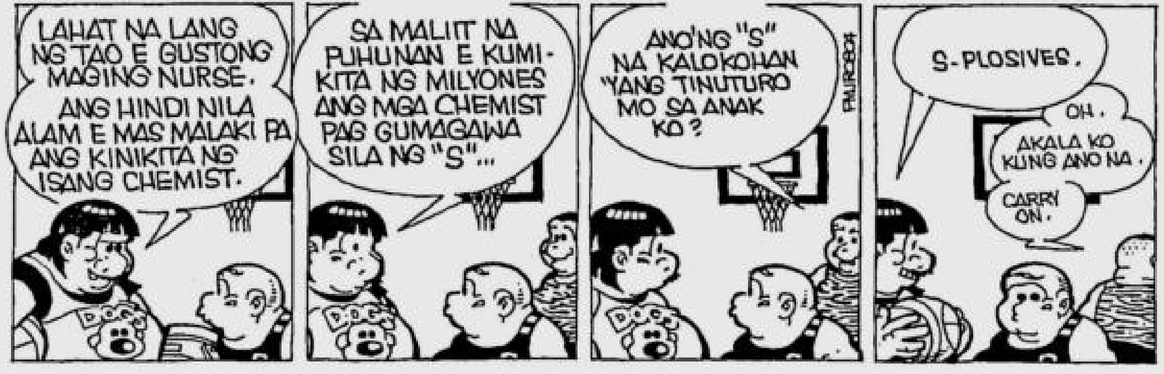
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PANALO DAW SI FPJ... NADAYA LANG!
ANO BA YAN?! LUMA NA YANG ELECTION! LET'S MOVE ON!!!
PATAY! PAPUNTANG CHA-CHA NA ANG MOVE NA YAN!
8/5/04

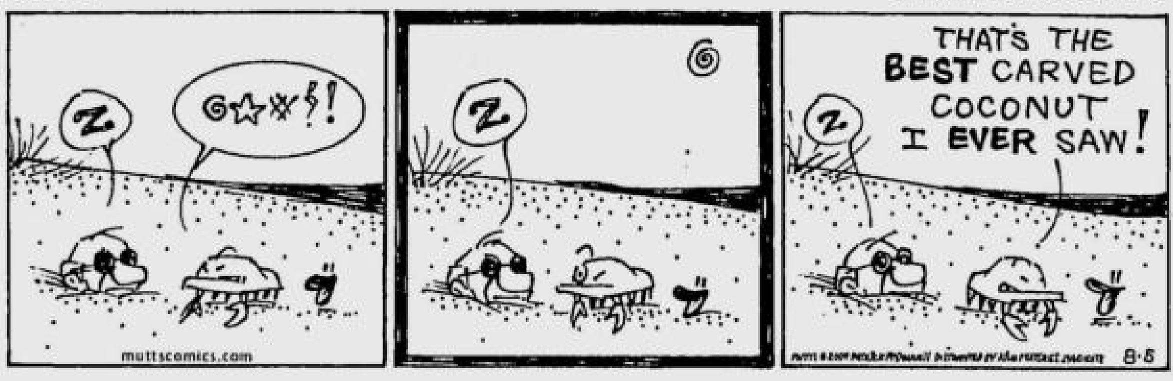
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


LAHAT NA LANG NG TAO E GUSTONG MAGING NURSE.
ANG HINDI NILA ALAM E MAS MALAKI PA ANG KINIKITA NG ISANG CHEMIST.
SA MALIIT NA PUHUNAN E KUMIKITA NG MILYONES ANG MGA CHEMIST PAG GUMAGAWA SILA NG "S"...
ANO'NG "S" NA KALOKOHAN 'YANG TINUTURO MO SA ANAK KO?
S-PLOSIVES.
OH.
AKALA KO KUNG ANO NA.
CARRY ON.

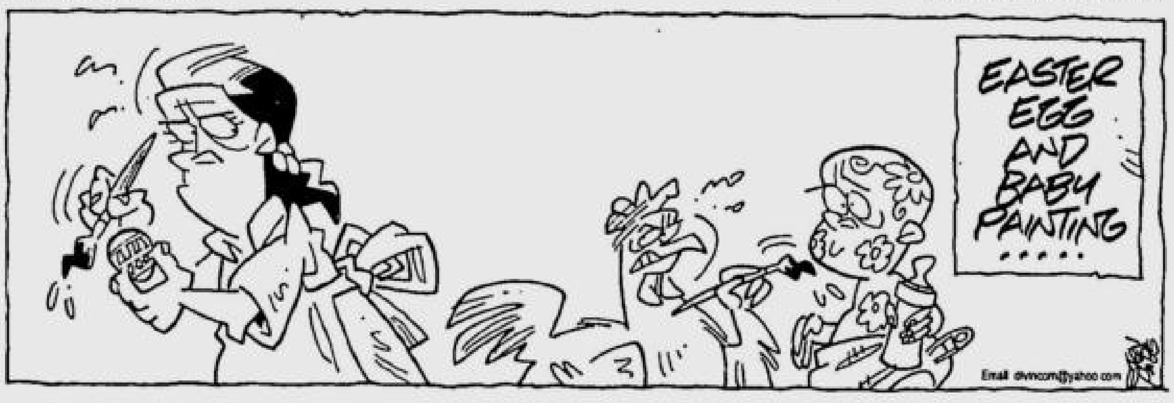
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


Z
G☆✳$!
THAT'S THE BEST CARVED COCONUT I EVER SAW!
muttscomics.com
8-5

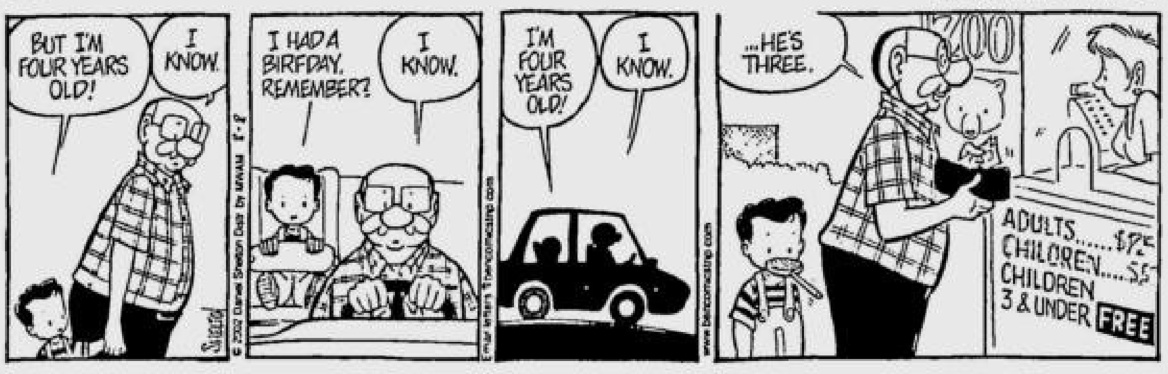
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


EASTER EGG AND BABY PAINTING
Email divincom@yahoo.com

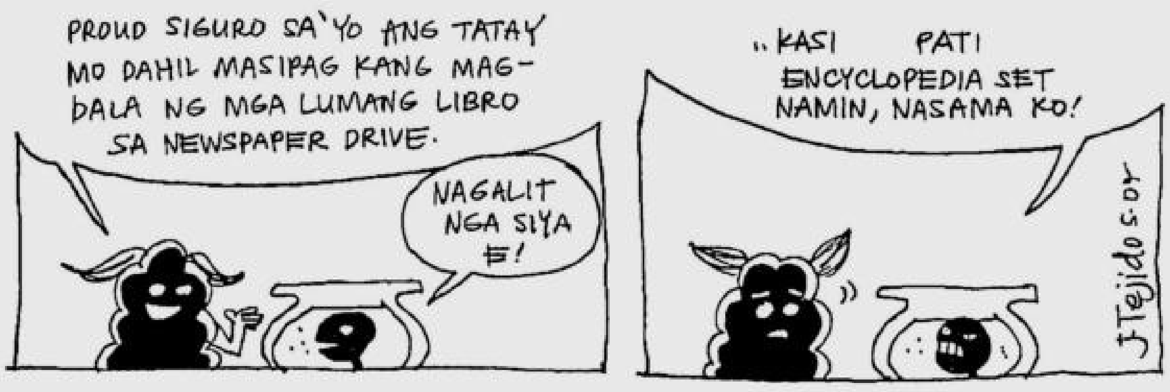
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


BUT I'M FOUR YEARS OLD!
I KNOW.
I HAD A BIRFDAY. REMEMBER?
I KNOW.
I'M FOUR YEARS OLD!
I KNOW.
...HE'S THREE.
ADULTS......$7.50
CHILDREN.....$5
CHILDREN 3 & UNDER FREE

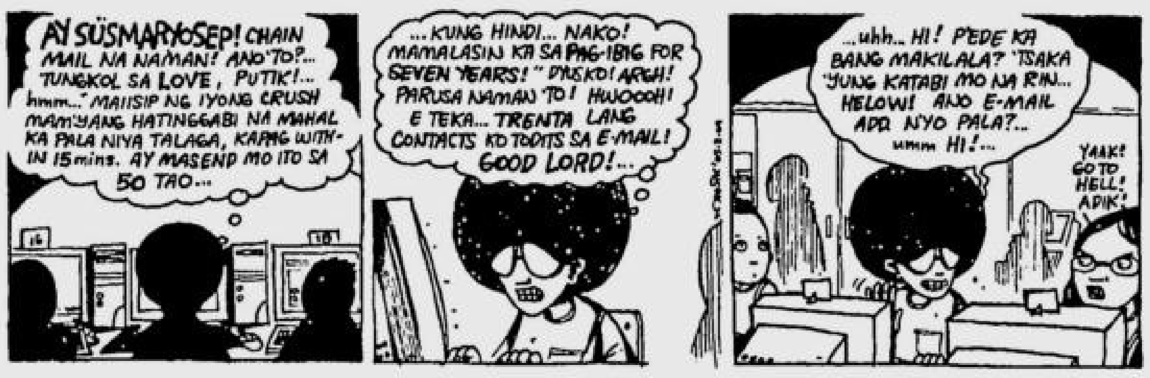
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PROUD SIGURO SA'YO ANG TATAY MO DAHIL MASIPAG KANG MAGDALA NG MGA LUMANG LIBRO SA NEWSPAPER DRIVE.
NAGALIT NGA SIYA E!
..KASI PATI ENCYCLOPEDIA SET NAMIN, NASAMA KO!
J Tejido 5.04

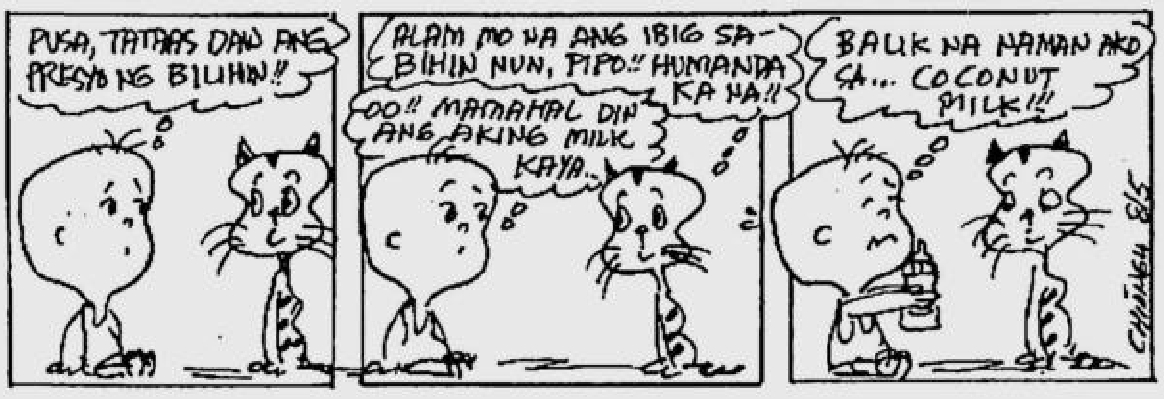
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


AY SÜSMARYOSEP! CHAIN MAIL NA NAMAN! ANO'TO?... TUNGKOL SA LOVE, PUTIK!... hmm..' MAIISIP NG IYONG CRUSH MAM'YANG HATINGGABI NA MAHAL KA PALA NIYA TALAGA, KAPAG WITHIN 15mins. AY MASEND MO ITO SA 50 TAO...
... KUNG HINDI... NAKO! MAMALASIN KA SA PAG-IBIG FOR SEVEN YEARS!" DYUSKO! ARGH! PARUSA NAMAN 'TO! HWOOOH! E TEKA... TRENTA LANG CONTACTS KO TODITS SA E-MAIL! GOOD LORD!...
...uhh.. HI! PEDE KA BANG MAKILALA? 'TSAKA 'YUNG KATABI MO NA RIN... HELOW! ANO E-MAIL ADD NYO PALA?... umm HI!...
YAAK! GO TO HELL! ADIK!

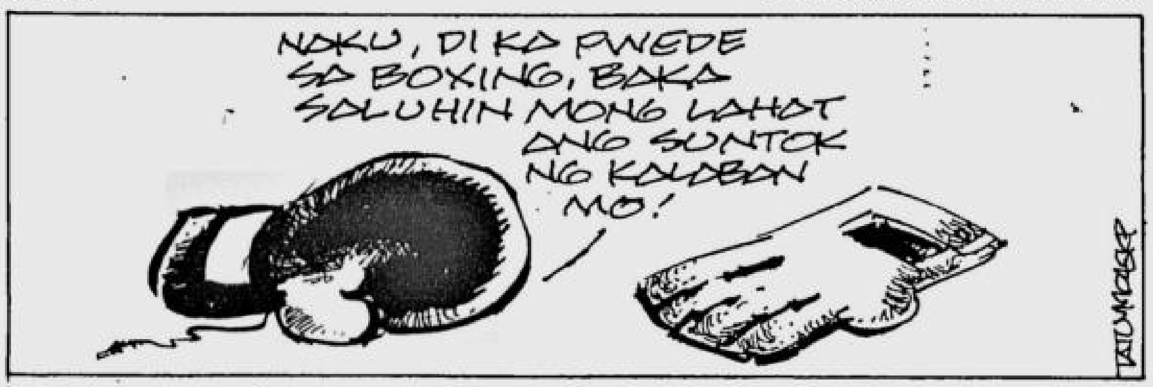
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, TATAAS DAW ANG PRESYO NG BILIHIN!!
ALAM MO NA ANG IBIG SABIHIN NUN, PIPO!! HUMANDA KA NA!!
OO!! MAMAHAL DIN ANG AKING MILK KAYA..
BALIK NA NAMAN AKO SA... COCONUT MILK!!!
CHIONGLO 8/5

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NAKU, DI KA PWEDE SA BOXING, BAKA SALUHIN MONG LAHAT ANG SUNTOK NG KALABAN MO!
TATUM

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY You are dignified, even regal at times. You project an aura of calm confidence and authority. You always appear to be in charge of whatever you're doing (even if you don't feel that way). You approach life aggressively and competitively. This year, all kinds of new, exciting beginnings are possible for you. **Birthdate of:** Neil Armstrong, astronaut; Sidney Omarr, astrologer; Loni Anderson, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is not a good day to gamble. It's very easy to think something is other than what it is. It's especially easy to fool yourself today. Be smart and play it safe.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In conversations with a parent or family member, you will be like two ships passing in the night. Fuzzy, weird misunderstandings will likely occur. Try to be aware of this.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is the classic day for misunderstandings. This applies not only to conversations, but also to driving, writing and daily activities. Double-check everything. Avoid accidents.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Be careful spending money today. What you actually get might not be what you expect. Someone could deceive you or inadvertently mislead you. But either way, you lose.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Encounters with others are demoralizing or discouraging today. At best, they're confused. You find it difficult to defend yourself against the silliest accusations. You don't know what to do. (Then do nothing!)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Today, you might see a side of someone that you did not know existed. Possibly, you might show a hidden side of yourself to someone. For the most part, it will just trigger confusion.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might gain a new awareness or sensitivity about a friend today. Your filters are down, and all kinds of unexpected information hit you now. Unfortunately, it will likely just confuse you. If so, do nothing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might pretend to agree with somebody in authority just to avoid conflict. This is certainly understandable. However, this could promote even further confusion!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Pie-in-the-sky thinking and unrealistic idealism prevail today. You seem to be surrounded by Pollyannas and well-meaning do-gooders. (A little more kitchen-sink reality is needed.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is not a good day to share belongings with somebody or to decide how to divide something. You could be duped or deceived. Just don't do it.

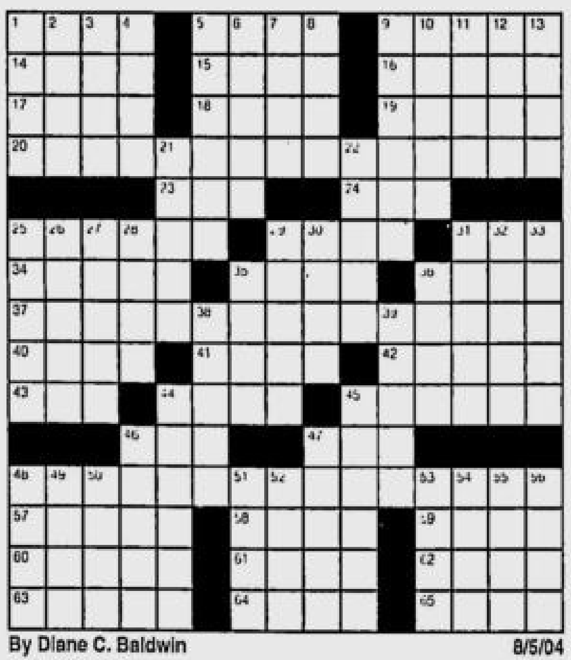
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't let anybody tempt you to pull a fast one today. And don't decide to pull one yourself. Furthermore, watch out that others don't do this to you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Don't play the victim role with anybody today—it won't work. Nobody really trusts anyone today. And those who do are just confused.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Hornet's relative
5 Rhine wine
9 Swampy stretch
14 Medicinal plant
15 Lendl of tennis
16 Gave an edge to
17 Archipelago member
18 Kiddy prohibition
19 Current vogue
20 Work with me!
23 Blue
24 Play Hamlet
25 Highest
29 Knock on the noggin
31 Used chairs
34 Paris river
35 Get lost!
36 Apiece
37 Let me fill you in
40 Twilight times
41 "Friends" friend
42 Lower than
43 Garnet's color
44 Woad and anil
45 Ode sentiment
46 Salon offering
47 Island garland
48 Stay with me
57 Amorous starer
58 Polly, to Tom Sawyer
59 Kitchen appliance
60 Beast of Bolivia
61 Stand unit
62 Suitor
63 Slightly drunk
64 Munich mister
65 Gets off track

DOWN
1 Siren's sound
2 As well
3 On one's own
4 Sneak a look
5 Intimate
6 Elliptical
7 Quitter's word
8 Square or granny
9 Comic's gimmick
10 Pessimistic expectation
11 In a fresh way
12 Chanteuse Horne
13 Swirl in a stream
21 Nincompoops
22 Capital of Vietnam
25 Wedding-party member
26 Vex
27 Bogged down
28 Fifths of five
29 Spassky's game
30 Blunderer's word
31 Mecca resident
32 Parcels of suburbia
33 In that place
35 Oxford or brogue
36 Sicilian landmark
38 Take a stab at
39 Catholic governing body
44 Provide for payment
45 Gray shade
46 Bouquet bottoms
47 Solitary one
48 Sudden shock
49 Citrus hybrid
50 Smack
51 Plaster backing strip
52 Tackle-box item
53 Site for an earring
54 At an end
55 Close at hand
56 African antelopes



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD
8/5/04

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

P	R	I	O	R	■	A	C	E	D	■	B	O	S	H
T	U	L	L	E	■	N	O	T	E	■	E	R	N	O
A	S	S	A	M	■	J	U	A	N	■	A	L	O	U
H	E	A	V	E	N	O	N	L	Y	K	N	O	W	S
■	■	■	D	E	U	T	■	■	■	R	I	N	S	E
P	A	P	A	Y	A	■	■	O	T	O	E	■	■	■
E	S	A	U	■	T	O	A	M	A	N	■	C	S	A
E	A	R	T	H	E	N	W	A	R	E	P	O	T	S
L	S	T	■	I	N	T	E	R	N	■	O	P	A	H
■	■	■	I	P	S	O	■	■	I	C	E	A	G	E
S	C	A	L	P	■	■	■	B	E	S	O	■	■	■
H	E	L	L	O	R	H	I	G	H	W	A	T	E	R
R	A	G	U	■	H	O	S	E	■	A	R	O	M	A
U	S	E	S	■	E	N	O	S	■	R	E	L	I	C
G	E	R	E	■	A	I	N	T	■	D	A	L	L	Y

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8/5/04

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Louie C. Camino

Text Feedback: inquirer ent name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

'I am not afraid of you, Mark'

'Nice of Kris to apologize, but she should listen to her mom more'

By Marinel R. Cruz

ACTRESS-MODEL Melanie Marquez, after lashing out at TV host, and actress Kris Aquino, has aimed her broadsides at Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid, Kris' boyfriend and son of Melanie's own ex-lover Sen. Lito Lapid.

In an interview on "The Buzz" last Sunday, Mark had said the Lapids were considering filing a case against Melanie because her earlier public pronouncements have hurt his mother Marissa.

The irrepressible Melanie has this to say to the young Pampanga governor: "I'm not afraid of you," she said through INQUIRER Entertainment. "I only speak of the truth. You must not forget that my husband is also a lawyer."

Melanie's current husband is Adam Lawyer, who is in fact an American lawyer handling lawsuits concerning banking and finance in Utah and Hawaii.

"Stop provoking me," Melanie told Mark. "You're only your father's son. Don't meddle with our affairs. I have issues to settle only with your parents. What you should do is take care of your people in Pampanga."

Melanie also said, "It's nice of Kris to admit she did something wrong."

Three Sundays ago on ABS-CBN's "The Buzz," Melanie had pleaded to her ex-lover, now Sen. Lito Lapid, to help finance the education of their son, Manuelito, 22. She said Manuelito, who is now in the US, wants to study medicine. She said she called the new senator many times, but he refused to talk with her.

MARQUEZ

The following Sunday, Kris, a host of "The Buzz," defended the senator. She said the senator was never an irresponsible father and that she knows his wife, Marissa, as a caring person.

Melanie in turn lashed out at Kris, saying the TV host and actress did not have the right to express her opinion on matters that did not concern her.

Last Sunday also on "The Buzz," Kris said on the show that her mother, former President Corazon Aquino, advised her to seek Melanie's forgiveness.

She said her mother pointed out to her that like Melanie, she (Kris) was never married to her former lover, Phillip Salvador, so she should be more understanding of how Melanie feels. Kris and Phillip has a son, Joshua.

"I'm sorry Melanie," said Kris on "The Buzz" last Sunday. "My mom said I'm better off in life, that's why I'm not experiencing these things. From now on, I would only speak for Mark and not his father. I'm shutting up."

Mark is her boyfriend, the senator's son who was elected governor of Pampanga last May, taking over from his father's previous position.

After acknowledging the apology, Melanie told Inquirer Entertainment on Monday, "(Kris) should listen to her mom some more. That way, she won't commit anymore mistakes.

"I was touched when I found out that she apologized," she said. "This only shows that she is an educated person. But I'm grateful to President Cory. Truly, mothers know best.

"I'm a forgiving person," she added. "OK *lang sa akin*, but Kris really has a lot to learn."

She said she received an invitation to appear on Kris' late-morning show "Good Morning, Kris" on ABS-CBN, but she had to turn it down, "because I'm busy preparing for my trip to Canada."

Melanie is set to conduct modelling workshops in Canada and train the candidates in the Miss Canada beauty pageant. She will later sit as one of the pageant judges.

Birthday Buboy turns 42 with ray of Sunshine /A23

Focus on screenwriters-for a change! /A23

DID YOU KNOW...

Former vice presidential candidate **Loren Legarda** took some time off from her busy schedule to watch "Catwoman" with her husband, **Tony Leviste**, and their youngest son, **Lean**, last Sunday at Glorietta 3, Ayala Center in Makati City. Loren looked very relaxed in a white blouse and khaki pants. Father and son were both in blue shirts.

NOW SHOWING

You can erase someone from your mind. Getting them out of your heart is another story.

"One of the great movie love stories ever told."
-- Glenn Whipp
LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS

Jim CARREY Kate WINSLET

ETERNAL SUNSHINE of the spotless mind

Kirsten DUNST Elijah WOOD

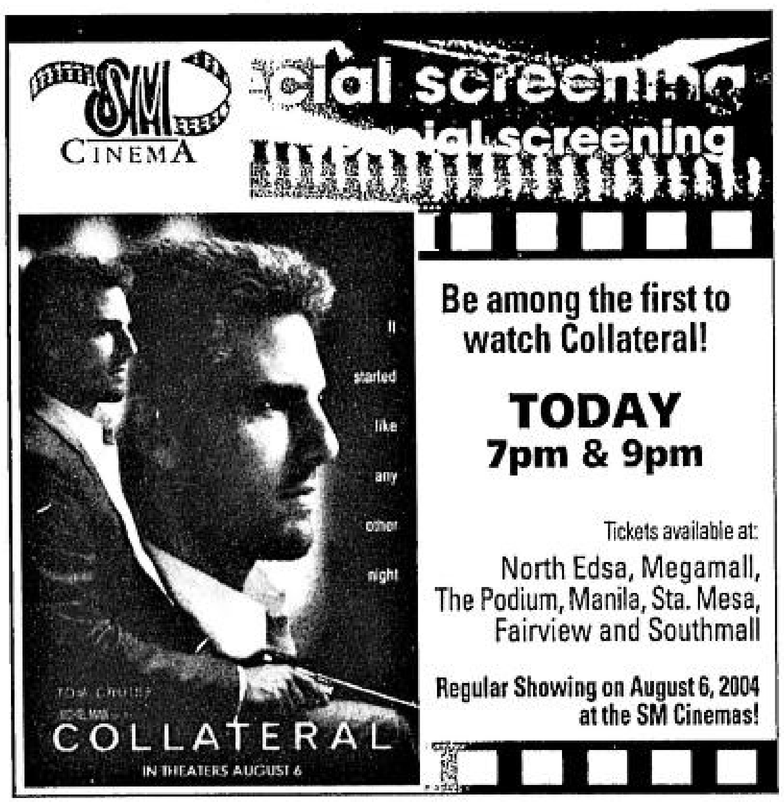
SHANG CINEPLEX
Thursday, August 5, 2004

1 GARFIELD FS: 12:15 pm, 2:25 pm, 4:35 pm, 6:45 pm. LMF: 8:55 pm (GP)
2 I, ROBOT FS: 12:40 pm, 3:20 pm (PG-13)
COLLATERAL FS: 7:00 pm, 9:30 pm (R-13)
3 CATWOMAN FS: 12:50 pm, 3:05 pm, 5:20 pm, 7:35 pm LMF: 9:50 pm (GP)
4

PREMIERE THEATRE IMELDA FS: 11:30, 1:50 pm, 4:10 pm (GP)
COLLATERAL FS: 7:35 pm, 10:05 pm (R-13)

For more information please call
633-7851 loc. 169 to 172

Shangri-La Plaza



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IN THEATERS AUGUST 6

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More movies on pages B7 and B8.

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Sylvia

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SM MEGAMALL
cinema 1

Subject to MTRCB Rating

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at all SM Cinemas nationwide

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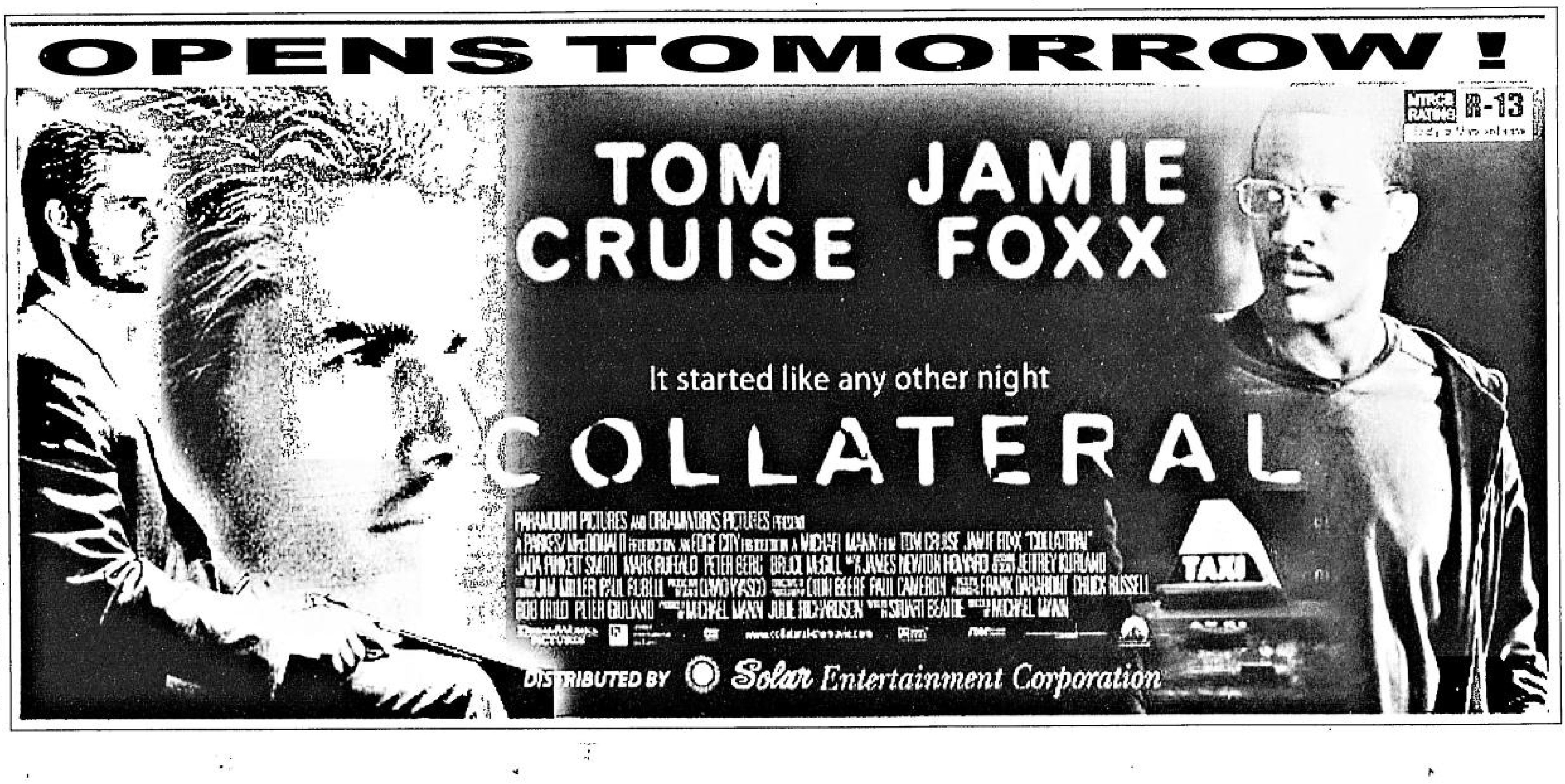

OPENS TOMORROW!

MTRCB RATING R-13

TOM CRUISE JAMIE FOXX

It started like any other night

COLLATERAL

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Focus on screenwriters—for a change!

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IT'S great to see many film people and organizations finally giving our screenwriters their due. This is a significant development, because much of the attention in these parts is fixed on stars and directors.

The way some people behave, it's as if movies were made without scripts, or that scripts were minor contributions to the entire filmmaking process.

Sure, the director is the captain of the cinematic ship, and stars get prospective viewers interested in seeing a movie. But, the script provides them the material they need to do their work, so it's been really disheartening to see screenwriters being treated so shabbily here.

Well, surcease is finally here, and we hope that our scriptwriters will be heartened by this development.

First, we must credit the early initiatives that gave importance to our screenwriters even when some other people were taking them for granted—the Palanca Awards' film and TV categories, the Film Development Foundation (now Council) of the Philippines' national screenwriting competition, and the ABS-CBN and Star Cinema tilts.

This year, other initiatives have added to the interest and excitement: The Viva Foundation for the Arts has launched its FSR Screenwriting Contest, named in honor of the late **Fermina Salvador-del Rosario (Mina Aragon)**.

The tilt has just announced its first winners: first prize, "Babae, Itinatakwil Mo Ba si Lalake?" by **Jimmy Flores**; second, "Ang Pangako" by **Princess Feliciano**; third; "Lihim" by **Leandro** and **Oliver Mendez.**

Even better than the substantial cash prizes (P250,000 for first prize, etc.) is Viva Films' pledge that it will film the top three entries.

Also deserving of praise is the Film Academy of the Philippines under the leadership of its new director general, **Leo Martinez**, for launching its own FAP screenwriting tilt. The contest is open to all Filipino citizens. It has two categories: Storyline and Screenplay. Five winners in the storyline category will be awarded P50,000 each, while three winners in the screenplay category will win P200,000 each.

Deadline is on Oct. 30. Contest rules and entry forms are available at the FAP office at OctoArts Bldg., ground floor, 108 Panay Ave., QC. For more details, check at www.filmacademy@fap.org.ph, or call 415-3880.

We trust that our screenwriters will take advantage of these new opportunities for them to show what they can do. And we hope that the move to give our writers the importance they deserve will continue to prosper, until Filipino screenwriters finally and truly come into their own.

New shows

CHANNEL 2 has launched four new shows to boost its Saturday-morning programming: At 7:30 a.m., the animé series "Rave"; at 8 a.m., "Iru Yasha"; at 8:30 a.m., "Power Rangers: Wild Force"; and at 11:30 a.m., "Love in the City."

'Will & Grace'

THE SIXTH season of "Will & Grace" starts this Sunday, Aug. 8 at 9 p.m. Bigger guest stars have been lined up for the new season's episodes—**Jennifer Lopez, Minnie Driver, Candice Bergen, John Cleese, John Black, Mira Sorvino, Barry Manilow, Dylan McDermott, Geena Davis**—etc!

Farewell tour

OLIVER Salonga, Namcya prize-winning pianist, is on a farewell performance tour until Aug. 21 before he resumes his studies at Lynn University in the US.

Schedule: Aug. 5, UST Conservatory of Music. Aug. 9, St. Paul University in Tuguegarao City. Aug. 21, Francisco Santiago Hall, Equitable PCI Bank.

He will attend a master class in Taiwan from Aug. 11 to 17, after which he will play Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor in his culminating concert on Aug. 21.

BIRTHDAY Buboy gives his Sunshine a song and then a kiss.

PHOTOS BY SONNY CHUA, THANKS TO R.D. ALBA

Cell phone, 4 cakes, crate of wine and Sunshine as Cesar turns 42

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

EVEN during his birthday last Aug. 1, **Cesar Montano** was still busy wrapping up his latest starrer, "Panaghoy Sa Suba (Call of the River)" in his native Bohol. Buboy (Cesar's nickname) is one of the few actors hereabouts who are really passionate about their craft, but he's not the type who would gloat about his achievements.

Buboy's pregnant yet stunning wife **Sunshine Cruz** flew in from Manila with their daughter "**Buching**" to be with him on his birthday. Along with the cast and crew of the movie, Shine and Buching surprised Buboy during the dinner break in the shooting. They all sang "Happy Birthday" and brought in four cakes and a crate of red wine.

Shine gave Buboy a new cell phone. "He's having problems with the signal of his old cell so I thought of getting him a new one," she said. "We burn the lines talking to each other when he's on location especially now that I'm due to give birth anytime."

The award-winning actor couldn't ask for anything more. He gushed, "I am truly blessed. Even if I'm quite tired directing and acting at the same time in this movie, it's all worth it when I think of all those people who have supported me, especially my family. Celebrating my 42nd birthday in my hometown makes it all the more memorable."

Birthday cheers to you, Buboy! Thanks for not being too much of a superstar to be a friend. Happiness and success could not have found a more deserving person.

House hunters' show

LOOKING for homes? Want to re-design your living space? Or perhaps you'd like to know about the different ways you can avail yourself of housing loans or about financing. Tune in to ABC 5 every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. for "Tahanang Pinoy," the show that brings together house hunters, homeowners, real estate developers, interior designers and movers and shakers in the housing industry.

The home and lifestyle show has something for every Filipino wanting to own a home in pursuit of a better life. It is a 30-minute program that showcases available residential properties and design solutions, and regularly features information and updates on the real estate and housing industries. "Tahanang Pinoy" is produced by Scribble Works Productions Inc.

'Gary V...Thankful'

GARY Valenciano promises to soothe tired souls and uplift weary lives in "Gary V...Thankful" on Friday, Aug. 6, 8 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum. Expected to excite kids and teeners are his numbers with his children **Paolo, Gabriel** and **Kiana** and special spots with the Maneuvers and the Animé dancers.

Also joining Gary are new and old friends such as **Piolo Pascual, Pam G.**, The Powerplay, the Hand Mime Group from the Jubilee Christian School, Youth Dancers of Jesus is Lord Fellowship, New Life Alabang, Christ Commission Fellowship, **Nina de Guzman, Sean Centeno, Iyo** and **Mandy Marcos, Egay Caole** on percussions, and **Jacee Balbutin** on violin.

Milestones mark Gary V's life on Friday: his 40th birthday, his 20th year of wedded bliss to former Camay girl and Music and Magic songbird **Angeli Pangilinan**, his 26th victorious year in his battle against juvenile diabetes.

"Gary V...Thankful" is a project of Manila Genesis Entertainment and his production companies, GV Productions Inc. and Manna Entertainment.

Tickets at P1200, P800, P600, P500, P250 and P75 are available at Ticketnet or Manila Genesis, 725-1937.

For feedback, e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

Asian premiers of AXN's 'Next Action,' 'CSI: Miami' Season 2

SHOW TIME

THIS August, two big TV series make their Asian premieres first and exclusively on AXN.

The new reality series "Next Action" premiers tonight at 8 p.m.

A brand new season of "CSI: Miami (Season 2), premiered last night at 9 p.m.

With Hollywood action movie producer Joel Silver ("The Matrix," "Lethal Weapon," "Die Hard") as executive producer, "Next Action Star" features ordinary men and women who are given a chance to experience the fame, fortune and glamour as well as the pitfalls of being a Hollywood action star.

An exciting behind-the-scenes look at how stars are made, it features 14 short-listed finalists who will live together in a Hollywood mansion and undergo intensive physical and stunt training and acting classes.

They will be given the superstar treatment as they face dramatic and spectacular screen tests worthy of a Hollywood production. In each episode, these screen tests will decide whether they stay on in the race or are eliminated.

Only one man and one woman will win the coveted starring roles in Joel Silver's next big action movie, "Bet Your Life."

"CSI: Miami" returns with more forensic science action, the spin-off of the top drama series "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation."

Winner of the 2003 Emmy Award for Outstanding Cinematography for a Single Camera Series and the 2003 People's Choice Award for Favorite New Television Dramatic Series, the first season of "CSI: Miami" was one of the most watched programs in the region.

Over 22.3 million viewers across Asia watched the first season of "CSI Miami" on AXN.

The second season of "CSI: Miami" will also feature a slew of guest stars, including supermodel Heidi Klum in the premiere episode, alligator expert Jeff Corwin and rap artist Xzibit.

SeeeMall! AYALA CENTER GLORIETTA & GREENBELT · ALABANG TOWN CENTER · AYALA CENTER CEBU

AT THE CENTER

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GLORIETTA	GREENBELT
Hard Rock Café: For inquiries, please call 843-4661 or 66	GREENBELT 2: MUSIC STYLES MUSIC STYLES featuring JAYCIE & HONEY August 5, 7:00 to 10:00pm

stage
Rep's Globe Theater presents PINOCCHIO
August 7 to December 12

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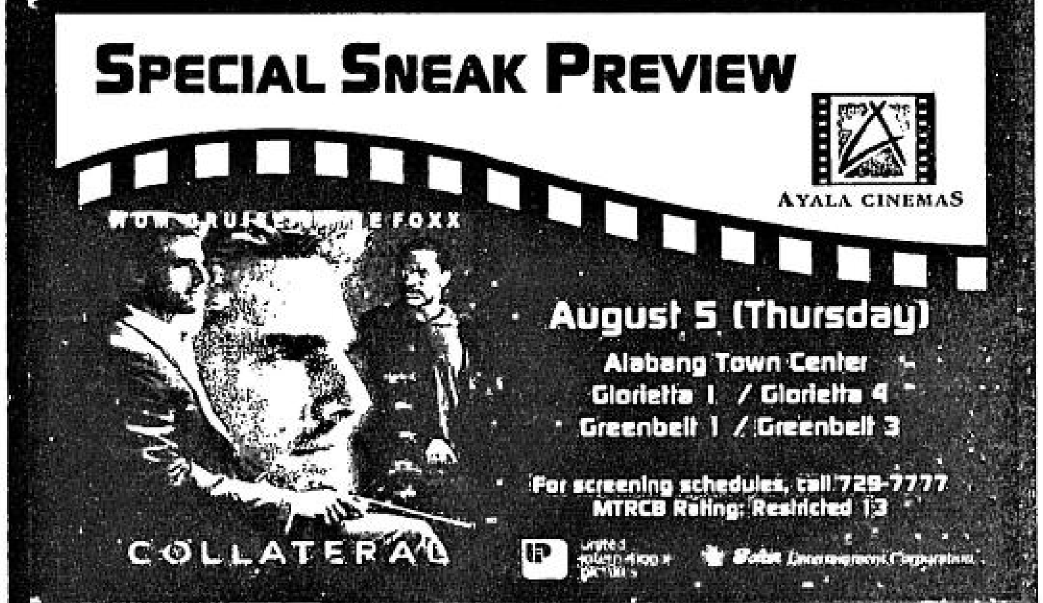
THX 1 IMELDA / COLLATERAL	1 BEAUTIFUL LIFE/ COLLATERAL	1 GARFIELD	5 IMELDA	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 CATWOMAN 2 00, 4 20, 6.40, 9 00, 11.20	1 GARFIELD
2 CATWOMAN	2 CATWOMAN	2 ETERNAL SUNSHINE	6 ALONG CAME POLLY/ COLLATERAL	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 IMELDA 1.30, 3 30, 5 30/ COLLATERAL 8 05, 10 40	2 PRINCE & ME
3 ETERNAL SUNSHINE	3 I, ROBOT	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 CATWOMAN 1 10, 3 30, 5.50, 8 10, 10 30	7 I, ROBOT	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 GARFIELD 1 45, 3 30, 5 15, 7.00, 8.45, 10 30	3 THE CURSE
4 I, ROBOT	4 ELLA ENCHANTED	4 ELLA ENCHANTED		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 1 30, 3 30, 5 30, 7 30, 9 30, 11 30	4 CATWOMAN
5 GARFIELD				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 I, ROBOT 1 30, 3 45, 6 00, 8 15, 10 30	5 ELLA ENCHANTED

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 CATWOMAN 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
2 I, ROBOT 12:10, 2:35, 5:00 / COLLATERAL 7.05, 9.40



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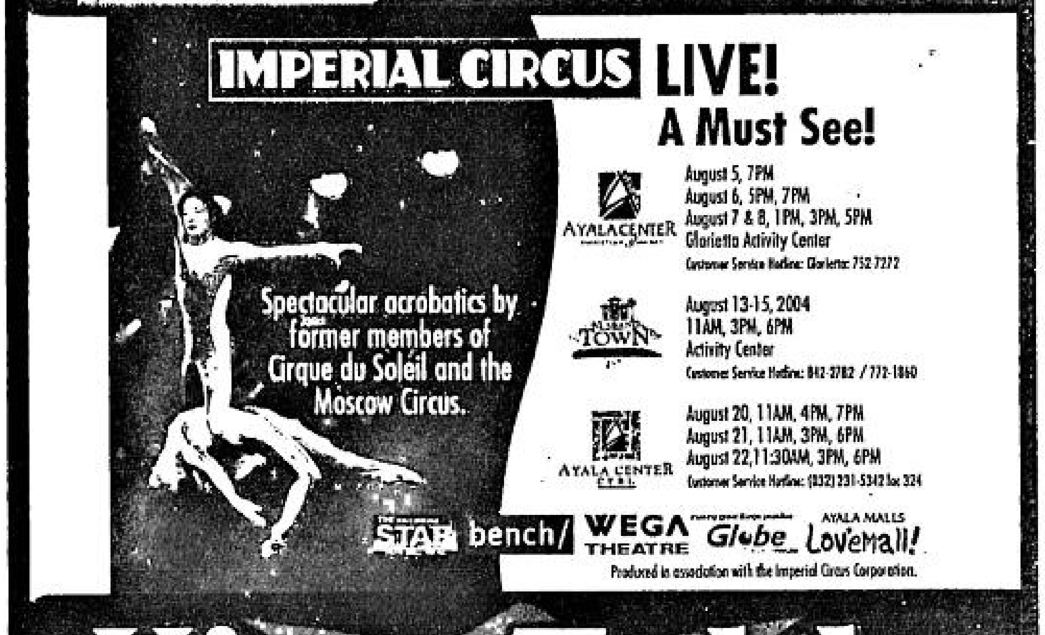

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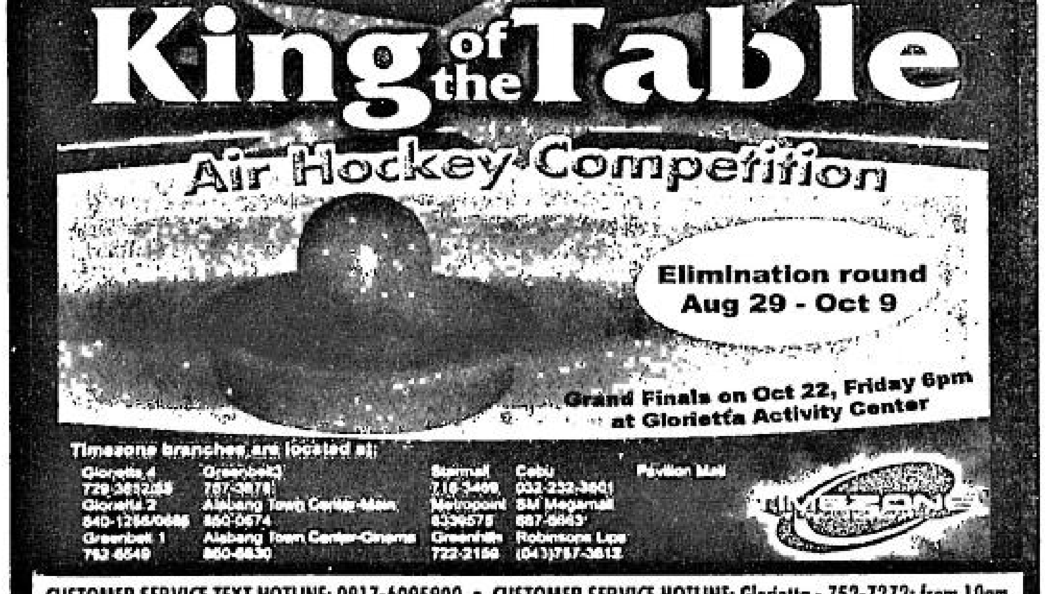

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Jul 31	Aug 1	Aug 7	Aug 8	Aug 14	Aug 15	Aug 21	Aug 22	Aug 27	Aug 28
EVER Ortigas		**SHOPWISE Libis**		**CHERRY Congressional**		**SM North Edsa**		**SM Megamall**	
Japoy Lizardo	Christine Jacob	Christine Jacob	Lydia de Vega	Japoy Lizardo	Lydia de Vega	Monsour del Rosario	Lydia de Vega	Japoy Lizardo	Lydia de Vega
EVER Commonwealth		**SHOPWISE Cubao**		**RUSTAN'S Harrison Plaza**		**SM Fairview**		**SM Manila**	
Christine Jacob	Japoy Lizardo	Monsour del Rosario	Christine Jacob	Monsour del Rosario	Japoy Lizardo	Lydia de Vega	Japoy Lizardo	Lydia de Vega	Japoy Lizardo

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ADB offers help to avert power crisis

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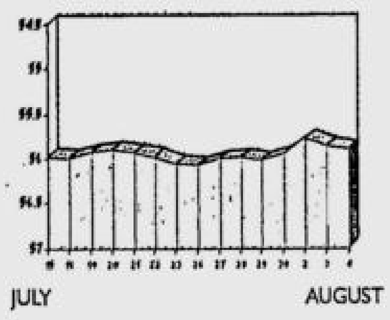

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By Doris C. Dumlao

WORRIED about the looming power crisis in the Philippines, the Asian Development Bank is proposing three possible intervention modes to help speed up the restructuring of the debt-ridden power sector.

"In this particular case, we are looking at policy lending, investment lending and a guarantee facility—a kind of enhancing facility which could be in the form of partial credit guarantee or political risk or to give comfort to investors," said Patrick Giraud, director of the ADB's Southeast Asian infrastructure division.

The ADB earlier said it was willing to provide a credit-enhancement facility for the cash-strapped National Power Corp. but it would like to see first some progress in the power sector's restructuring.

"On the other hand, we can see now that there may be a need for the ADB to be more active in support of government to help this power sector reform to move forward," Giraud told reporters at the sidelines of the signing of the bank's $1.5-million grant to bring renewable energy and livelihood opportunities to the low-income villages of Negros Occidental on Tuesday.

"We don't want just to sit there and wait. We want to have a proactive role," he added.

Giraud said the ADB was now in discussions with the government on a comprehensive program to address the issues hounding the power sector, which in turn might lead to a fresh program loan with certain conditions.

"If the government can resolve these issues then we can implement assistance. Parallel to that, there is also an emergency investment. All those together, there will be a policy component and maybe an investment component and maybe a guarantee. It can be a package and we are discussing

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Power drum song

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

ENOUGH of the bad news. Let us look at the positive side of the frightening power crisis.

If we have a power crisis again, similar to the 12-hour blackouts during the time of Tita Cory, many of us would not have to work.

That was when the economy nearly collapsed. The GDP contracted, all thanks to Tita Cory's advisers who could not tell the difference between "ampere" and "armpit."

Okay, I can think of one downside to the power crisis. And that is, if we have nothing to do at work, we may be exhausted doing overtime work in the bedroom. Our birthrate will go up after nine months. And the bishops and the priests will be happy.

* * *

IN Malacañang, anyway, they now somehow admit that the power crisis is real. Thus, Malacañang announces that it frowns upon stupid court rulings on the power sector.

One bright side to the power crisis is, well, companies are already suffering from rotating brownouts in the Visayas. Business there is not moving as well as it should. Of course the rest of the country will have to follow soon.

The good news is that Malacañang knows there is a problem. Using polite language, Malacañang even hit a recent ruling by the Court of Appeals.

It involves the rate increase, which the regulatory authority on the power sector, the Energy Regulatory Commission or ERC itself, had decided to give to Meralco.

Even in business, they think that if the courts can—and always do—rule on highly technical matters like power rates, let us just abolish the ERC.

For that matter, if the courts think they are competent enough to decide on everything under the sun, we can abolish all the government line agencies. We can save tons of money.

* * *

CLEARLY, in the eyes of Malacañang, the problem all boils down to investor confidence in the power sector. Yet this country needs all the investors it can get.

Huge companies like Napocor and Meralco are weak financially because of the political and judicial meddling in regulatory matters.

And so how do other investors think they will fare? Much worse, I suppose.

This year alone, thanks to the subsidy which this administration had imposed on power rates (designed to raise Gloriaetta's approval ratings), Napocor is facing total losses of P140 billion.

Meralco, the biggest power distributor here, already cut its investments in new facilities. Its income is shrinking because its rates did not move for the past 15 years.

The reaction of the financial markets was rather telling. Credit-rating companies abroad downgraded Meralco's creditworthiness nine times in just the past four years. *Uhm, buhay ka pa!*

* * *

IN other words, since the big boys Napocor and Meralco are not doing well, big as they are, going into the power business in this country is not an attractive venture.

The government, from the executive to the judiciary, from the legislature to the ERC, often cave in to political pressure.

You can actually read such an analysis of the cause-effect in the power sector in what we in media have come to know as the "Piki papers."

Piki is Federico Lopez, the young and brilliant president of First Generation Holdings Corp., and yes, the firm belongs to the Lopez family of Meralco.

Earlier, the "Piki papers" created a stir in media, mainly because it warned of a power shortage by 2007.

Of course Piki Lopez's critics said that the "Piki papers" were self-serving, since his family was involved in the power business.

But to me, that's precisely why we must listen to him. The guy knows the power business. Me, I'd rather listen to him talk about the power business than the lawyers and the judges inside the court room.

The government, particularly the Department of Energy, also reacted violently to the "Piki papers." The government thinks the shortage will not happen until 2008.

Whether it's 2007 or 2008, what the heck, the power drum song remains the same—we are facing a shortage unless we do something immediately.

* * *

AS I said, in the Visayas, they are now experiencing a power shortage, either due to lack of power generation facilities or a shortage of transmission lines.

For instance, the state-owned Napocor generates more electricity in Eastern Visayas than what is needed in the area.

But due to a lack of transmission lines, Napocor cannot bring the excess electricity to Western Visayas, where Gloriaetta won by miraculous margins.

If in the Visayas, one foot of the business sector is now in the grave, thanks to the power crisis, business in the rest of the country must be praying hard.

We have a bad history in the power business. Sure, Kuya Eddie solved the crisis he inherited from Tita Cory, but at what cost?

So when the mob got angry over the high power rates, this popularity-challenged cute administration must cave in. The rest is bad history. We are in trouble.

* * *

IN case you haven't heard, nobody is investing in the power sector. Yet we need to start packaging the financing and drawing the plans for new plants right now.

The meddling of the courts does not help. It's as if the ERC is not competent enough to decide on power rates.

All right, the hidden message in the court ruling was that the ERC could have given the rate increase because somebody was ... well, paid handsomely.

If that is so, we must file criminal cases to send the crooks to jail. At least in the criminal case, the courts do not have to deal with technical matters.

As it is, however, if somebody is suspected of doing wrong in ERC, everything stops in the power business, and the whole country suffers. Full of wisdom indeed.

GMA 7 nets ₱750M in 1st half

By Clarrisa S. Batino

GMA NETWORK Inc. has registered a net profit of more than P750 million in the first half of the year due to robust advertising sales, the company's top official said.

"I think we made slightly below P800 million in profits during the first half," said Felipe Gozon, GMA president.

Despite the higher-than-expected earnings during the first six months, Gozon said the company would not revise its full year net income forecast of P1.5 billion this year from about P1 billion in 2003.

The country's second-largest broadcast network posted P576 million in net profit in the first semester last year, up 463 percent from the previous year. Of the first half earnings in 2003, P412 million came during the second quarter.

Total sales of the country's second largest broadcast firm in the first half last year reached P3.013 billion.

"Net profit in the second quarter grew more than 50 percent against the previous year while sales went up by about 38 percent," Gozon earlier said.

From January to March this year, GMA registered P251 million in net income.

The company's strong performance comes ahead of the planned initial public offering tentatively scheduled in September or early next year. The company is planning to sell 30 percent of its shares to the public to raise as much as P9 billion for the broadcast firm and its major shareholders.

Gozon earlier said the company would likely exceed its forecast for the year.

"But we do not intend to change our target of P1.5 billion," he said. "It's better to be ahead of the target."

The GMA president credited the surge in airtime revenues to its top-rated shows that attract advertisers. He claimed that GMA had managed to maintain its No. 1 overall rating.

Citing data from AGB Phils. and Nielsen Media, GMA said it led by one point in the average total day TV ratings. AGB data showed that the network's ratings increased by four rating points to 17 percent while in the Nielsen data, its ratings jumped two points to 13 percent.

GMA is 30 percent owned by the Gozon family while 70 percent is split between the Jimenez and Duavit families. The company's debut into the equities market is eagerly awaited given a dearth in new and quality offerings in the last couple of years.

Gozon said the company does not need the IPO proceeds to finance expansion plans in the pipeline as it had been using profits from operation to finance most of the improvements and upgrade.

The network giant booked P1.05 billion in net profits last year and said this should increase by about 50 percent this year.

The broadcast firm had set aside between P500 and P750 million for its four major expansion programs starting in the third quarter this year so it could compete more aggressively against its fierce rival in the industry.

GMA has an overseas arm called GMA Worldwide. By September, the company would put up a new subsidiary, GMA International, to service the American market.

Beer sales boost SMC Q2 profit

SAN MIGUEL Corp., Southeast Asia's largest food and drinks group, likely posted higher quarterly profits on strong beer sales during a long national election campaign, and lower costs at its soft drinks unit, company sources said on Wednesday.

San Miguel, 15 percent owned by Japan's Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd., recorded net income of around P4 billion in the first half, according to two sources from the company who asked not to be identified.

Taking out the first quarter net profit of P1.74 billion, that would mean the company earned P2.26 billion in the second quarter, up 32 percent from P1.71 billion a year earlier.

The result would be in line with market expectations of P2 billion to P2.6 billion for the three months to June.

The company today is due to announce its second-quarter results.

Analysts said San Miguel, the country's most valuable company with a market value of $3.6 billion, had been a big winner from spending related activities to the May 10 national elections.

Beer and hard liquor make up around a third of group revenue.

San Miguel is expected to earn net profit of P8.66 billion this year against P7.37 billion last year, according to Reuters estimates.

San Miguel's B shares, open to all investors, rose 3.5 percent in the second quarter against a 10.89-percent jump in the main stock index. On Wednesday, the B shares slid 0.72 percent to P69 as as the main index rose 0.58 percent. *Reuters*

Aboitiz to merge transport units

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE ABOITIZ group is planning to merge its transport subsidiaries under its publicly-listed company.

According to Jon Ramon Aboitiz, Aboitiz Equity Ventures (AEV) president, they are planning to merge its private interests with publicly-listed Aboitiz Transport System Corp. (ATSC), formerly WG&A, possibly in the next two to three years.

Aboitiz said it may place its private units—courier group Aboitiz One and international provider for crewing and ship management Aboitiz Jebsen Bulk Transportation Corp., among others—under ATSC.

"What we are looking forward to is to be able to put all our transport-related businesses ... together to have one transport company," Aboitiz said.

Although they are separate corporate entities, the firms tend to cross sell products, he added.

Aboitiz said that with the planned consolidation, they would be able to build on the strength of having one brand.

"It makes no sense to have separate (transport businesses)," Aboitiz said. "There is a lot of work that is required."

ATSC is the country's largest passenger and cargo shipping operator. It has a route network of 27 ports of call in the Philippines and a fleet of 19 operating vessels.

Supercat Fast Ferry Corp., which is a joint venture between ATSC and Hong Kong Parkview Co., is the country's biggest inter-island fastcraft ferry services operator.

Currently it has a fleet of seven high-speed vessels plying Visayas, and routes linking Batangas and Mindoro in Luzon.

The privately owned Aboitiz Jebsen is a partnership with Norwegian shipping firm Jebsen Group.

Another private company, Aboitiz One, manages the courier and forwarding service of Aboitiz Express.

Stocks end high on good earnings results

STOCKS yesterday finished higher for the first time in four days, propped up by strong earnings results from major telecom players led by No. 1 PLDT and second-ranked Globe Telecom.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), a quarter owned by Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., jumped 2.8 percent, or P35, to P1,285. It accounted for 29 percent of total trade.

Globe Telecom Inc., which is jointly controlled by conglomerate Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecommunications, rose 2.87 percent, or P25, to P895.

"The good corporate results by PLDT and Globe, which were eagerly awaited by investors, boosted sentiment," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan. "This, plus a technical rebound on recently battered issues like Meralco and its parent First Philippine Holdings Corp. boosted the market."

The main index ended up 10.88 points, or 0.7 percent, at 1,572.91 points.

Value turnover rose 53 percent to P869.9 million, as gainers outnumbered losers 30 to 29.

PLDT on Tuesday announced record profits of P12 billion in the first half against P1.78 billion last year, as mobile traffic surged around May's election.

The company raised its profit target this year to P22 billion, 22 percent higher than earlier forecast.

Globe earlier reported a 29-percent jump in second-quarter profit to P3.8 billion.

Power retailer Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), which had dropped 29 percent over the past four days after a court nullified the unbundling of its power rates, jumped 3.49 percent or 75 centavos to P22.25.

Its parent, energy holdings firm First Philippine Holdings, rose 3.26 percent or 75 centavos to P23.75.

"The market will slowly creep back into consolidation once the earnings season is over," Vistan said. "We see the market moving within the 1,550 to 1,580 range."

"Players are just waiting for the corporate results of the remaining blue chips that have not yet announced their earnings like SM Prime Holdings Inc." *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 4, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.25	47,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	41.5	41.5	40.5	40.5	1,017,100
China Banking Corp.	530	530	530	530	260
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	40	40	39.5	39.5	24,500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.48	0.49	140,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26	25.5	25.5	55,700
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	7,800
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	12,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	45,400
Security Bank Corp.	20.5	20.5	20.25	20.5	53,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.25	24.5	24	24.5	12,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	70,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2210	2215	2210	2215	2,640
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	145,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	108	108	108	108	1,100
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1535	1535	1525	1530	940
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20	20	20	20	8,600
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.65	860,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	875	900	875	895	248,100
Ipeople Inc.	1.52	1.58	1.52	1.58	57,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	200,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	17,888,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1280	1285	1270	1285	194,910
Ivantage Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.59	0.6	600,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	14,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.25	15.75	15	15.25	148,600
Manila Electric Co. B	22.25	23	22	22.25	4,423,100
Petron Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.75	393,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	60,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	1.14	1.16	1.12	1.14	551,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	150,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	150,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.35	0.4	0.35	0.4	6,890,000
Union Cement Corp. 1.74	1	.74 1.	74 1.	74	141,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	1,332,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	116,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	24.25	24.75	24.25	24.5	500,100
RFM Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.81	0.88	320,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.38	0.42	0.38	0.4	1,400,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57	57	80,800
San Miguel Corp. B	69.5	69.5	68.5	68.5	86,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.32	0.34	0.31	0.31	870,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	28,000,000
Ayala Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.3	1,445,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	280,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.15	3.15	3.05	3.1	332,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	500
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,300,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	3,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.68	161,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.22	1.22	1.1	1.1	178,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.16	0.14	0.155	1,890,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.53	4,300,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	10,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.18	2,600,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	1,200,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.97	1.12	0.97	1.1	29,140,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.036	0.036	0.032	0.032	2,500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.95	100,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	3	3	3	3	25,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23.5	24.5	23.5	23.75	1,087,900
Global Equities Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.065	0.065	2,100,000
IPVG Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	33,000
Keppel Holdings	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.58	1.6	772,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	3,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	759,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.135	0.155	0.135	0.155	110,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,870,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	12,400,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.165	0.155	0.16	2,240,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	350,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	45,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	299,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	2,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	210,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	310,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	240,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	48,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	20	20.25	20	20.25	288,800
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.6	412,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.46	0.47	0.44	0.45	440,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	3,900,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	3,460,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	7,830,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.155	0.165	0.155	0.165	1,530,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	610,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.0875	0.0875	0.0875	0.0875	100,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	1,000
SM Development Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	186,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	354,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	44,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	2.85	3.05	2.85	3.05	148,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	1,510,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.245	1,170,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	273,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	471,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	60,000,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	30,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	15,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0036	0.0038	0.0036	0.0038	193,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	14,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	3,000,000

DISCLOSURES

GINEBRA San Miguel Inc. declared a cash dividend of P0.375 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Aug. 20 and will be payable on Sept. 13.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. declared a P1 per share cash dividend on the company's Series B, F, Q, V and Z 10-percent cumulative convertible preferred stock in favor of stockholders of record as of Sept. 1 and payable on Sept. 30. Cash dividends were also declared for the company's Series III, V, VI and VII convertible preferred stock in the amounts of $1.029412, P4.675, $0.09925 and 10.179725 yen per share, respectively. Dividends are payable on Oct. 15 to stockholders of record as of Sept. 2.

* * *

MANULIFE Financial Corp. disclosed the resignation of Trevor Matthews as senior executive vice president and general manager of Japan.

* * *

SQL Wizard Inc. declared a 25-percent stock dividend in favor of stockholders of record as of Aug. 19.

* * *

FAR Eastern University moved its annual stockholders' meeting from Aug. 28 to Sept. 18.

* * *

PRIME Media Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 30, 9 a.m. at the First e-Bank Tower, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Aug. 20 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. Also, the board accepted the resignation of Carlos Pedrosa as chair and president of the company. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

August 4, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.829669	1.000000	55.8100
Japan	Yen	0.007500	0.009040	0.5045
United Kingdom	Pound	1.514395	1.825300	101.8700
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106376	0.128215	7.1557
Switzerland	Franc	0.648533	0.781677	43.6254
Canada	Dollar	0.629682	0.758956	42.3573
Singapore	Dollar	0.482562	0.581632	32.4609
Australia	Dollar	0.584850	0.704920	39.3416
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.200830	2.652661	148.0450
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.221240	0.266660	14.8823
Brunei	Dollar	0.481162	0.579945	32.3667
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000109	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.020074	0.024195	1.3503
UAE	Dirham	0.225896	0.272272	15.1955
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.205300	67.2678
Argentina	Peso	0.277018	0.333890	18.6344
Brazil	Real	0.271666	0.327439	18.2744
Denmark	Kroner	0.134492	0.162103	9.0470
India	Rupee	0.017919	0.021598	1.2054
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218363	0.263193	14.6888
Mexico	New Peso	0.072670	0.087589	4.8883
New Zealand	Dollar	0.535477	0.645411	36.0204
Norway	Kroner	0.118634	0.142990	7.9803
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014170	0.017079	0.9532
South Africa	Rand	0.132586	0.159806	8.9188
Korea	Won	0.000712	0.000858	0.0479
Sweden	Kroner	0.108677	0.130988	7.3104
Syria	Pound	0.020496	0.024704	1.3787
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024345	0.029343	1.6376
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000433	0.000522	0.0291

Protect farm gains, Arroyo urged

LEADERS of some of the country's largest farmers organizations recently called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to preserve her administration's gains in the agriculture sector.

The call was made amid a looming leadership change in the agriculture department.

At the same time, farm leaders lauded the commitment made by Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. to continuously support the advancement of the farming and fisheries sectors.

Lorenzo earlier vowed to help Ms Arroyo in sustaining the growth momentum of the agriculture sector.

Lorenzo will soon assume the chairmanship of the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines and the Quedan Guarantee Corp. Arroyo has also designated him Presidential Adviser for Countryside Development.

Lorenzo made the commitment to continue supporting the farm and fisheries sector gave the assurance after the Makati Business Club (MBC) and various farmer organizations expressed concern that the country's recent gains in agriculture might be adversely affected by the change in the leadership in the Department of Agriculture.

The MBC earlier said it "lamented the loss of the services of Secretary Lorenzo," saying he was an important player in key policy agenda items of Arroyo—jobs, food security and anti-poverty programs.

Farmer groups, for their part, noted the significant 8.2-percent growth posted by the agriculture sector in the first quarter of this year, the highest growth rate posted by the sector in 15 years.

7TH CONSECUTIVE MONTH

June exports up 8.2% to $3.3B

By Michelle V. Remo

MERCHANDISE exports grew by 8.2 percent in June to $3.313 billion, as global demand for electronics products, the country's biggest export earner, expanded during the period.

This was the seventh consecutive month the export sector had registered growth.

The June export performance brought the growth for the first six months of the year to 8.5 percent, down from 15.3 percent in the first five months of the year.

The latest export figure was higher than the $3.06 billion recorded in the same month last year. It was also 1.7 percent higher than the exports recorded in May this year.

The National Statistics Office said electronics products, which accounted for about 70 percent of the country's total exports, registered a double-digit growth of 17.7 percent to $2.275 billion in June.

"The year-to-date growth of electronics products stands at 9.75 percent, strengthening hopes that the country will achieve its 10-percent export growth target for the year," National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo Neri said.

Neri, who is also the country's economic planning secretary, said in a statement that demand for electronics products around the world was normally on the rise in the middle of the year, benefiting exporting countries like the Philippines.

The country's exports to Japan, in particular, rose by a hefty 45.2 percent in June to $677.4 million. Japan accounted for 20.4 percent of the country's total exports in June, making it the Philippines' top export market during the period.

The export performance in June allayed fears that the 1.6-percent decline in imports last May could lead to a drop in exports in the following months.

The country's imports are composed mostly of inputs for electronics products.

The NSO noted that exports of semiconductors grew by 12.5 percent during the month, while that of electronic data processing machines rose by 40.3 percent. Exports of communication and office equipment grew by 56.8 percent and 15.7 percent, respectively.

Neri said that while the electronics sector was recording a positive performance, the eroding competitiveness of the other export products should be immediately addressed to prevent them from pulling down the country's overall export performance.

Neri said that labor-intensive manufacturing industries—such as of garments, textile and yarn, footwear, wood manufactures, and travel goods and handbags—needed immediate attention. These sectors have posted decline in exports.

Statistics showed that compared with the performance in the first half of last year, garments exports fell by 15.9 percent in the same period this year. Textile and yarn exports fell by 15.8 percent, footwear by 45 percent, wood manufactures by 49.5 percent; and travel goods and handbags by 42.8.

Neri is pushing for a more diversified list of export products, saying that too much concentration on electronics is not safe as that will only make the country vulnerable to the cyclical swings in the information technology industry.

Globe full-year profit seen to hit ₱14B

GLOBE Telecom Inc.'s profits this year could exceed P14 billion from P10.3 billion in 2003, according to company officials.

Globe officials expect that the strong performance in the second quarter will be replicated in the last two quarters.

Globe registered a net income of P3.9 billion in the second quarter against P3 billion in the first three months after it added 1.4 million subscribers from April to June. By the end of the first half, there were about 10.5 million Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers, officials said.

Delfin Gonzalez, Globe chief finance officer, said the company had no reason to think that the second quarter improvement in profitability would not be sustained.

Unlike its competitor, Globe does not believe the spike in sales and income during the second quarter is mostly due to election spending.

Gonzalez added that the profit picture should not slow from what was posted in April to June.

"The May profit was not substantially higher than June," he said. "I think the election did not have a substantial impact on the numbers. I think we can sustain the profitability in the remaining quarters."

From a profit of P6.9 billion in the first half, Globe's earnings could hit P14.7 billion if it could sustain the trend during the second quarter, analysts said. *Clarissa S. Batino*

SOLAR POWER
Community members listen intently as a renewable energy engineer demonstrates how electricity is collected in the solar panel and stored in a battery, which will then power electric lights for use in the villager's households. Thirty households in Brgy. Katualan, Panabo City, Davao, now enjoy lights in their homes through the Alliance for Mindanao Off-grid Renewable Energy (Amore) Program. Funded by the US Agency for International Development and implemented by Winrock International in partnership with the Department of Energy, the program aims to provide villages in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Western Mindanao and Central Mindanao with sustainable and clean stand-alone renewable energy from indigenous sources. Davao Light and Power Co. Inc. provided the renewable energy systems in the five remote villages covered by Amore in Davao.

Thrift banks' loans to property sector up

By Doris C. Dumlao

LENDING by thrift banks to the real estate sector expanded by 22 percent as of end-March from year-ago level, indicating the sector's stronger interest in the property sector compared to commercial banks.

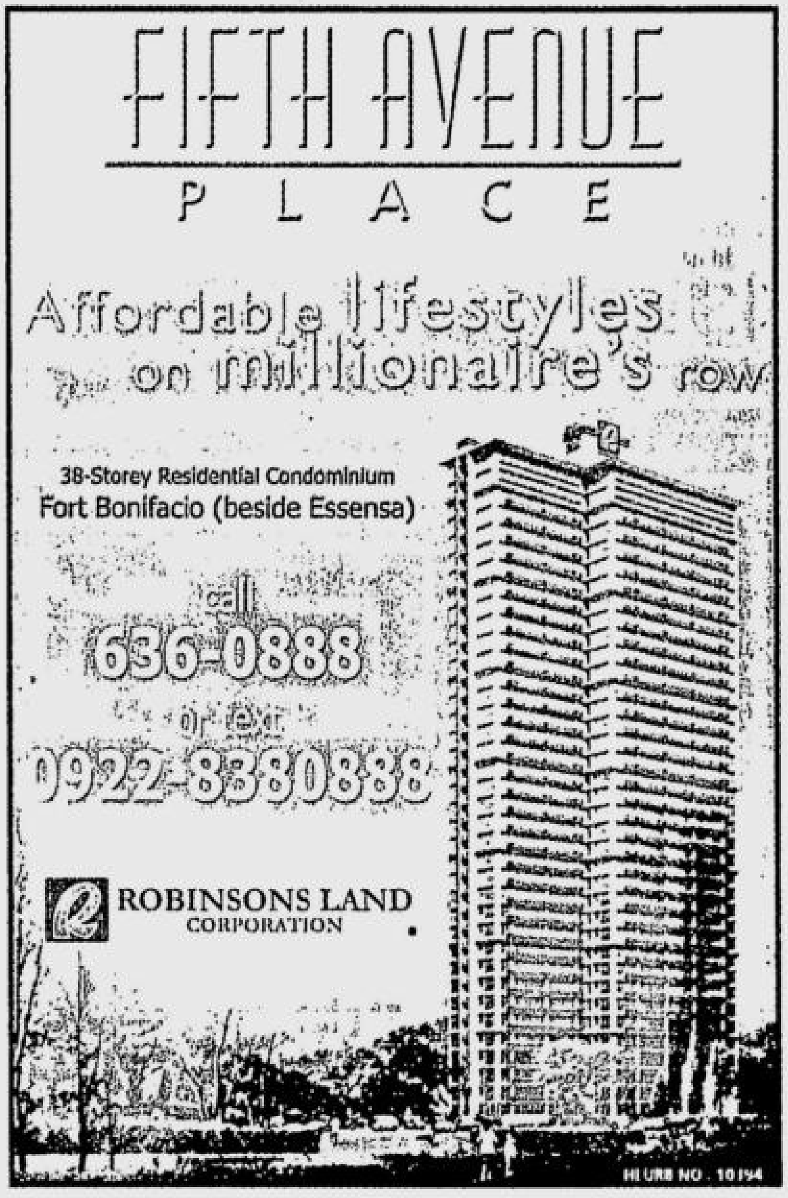
The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said the sector's exposure amounted to P47.2 billion, of which 99.8 percent consisted of real estate loans while the remainder was in the form of investments.

Their exposure to the property sector accounted for 21.7 percent of the industry's total loan and investment portfolio.

The 22-percent rise in real estate exposure posted by the thrift banks outpaced the 3.2 percent combined real estate loans and investments registered by the country's commercial banks in the same period.

The growth , however, indicated the same trend - Philippines banks are starting to regain their interest in the property sector after the regional downturn that triggered the Asian currency turmoil in 1997.

Some P33.3 billion in loans extended by the thrift banks were used for the acquisition of residential units by borrowers. This expanded by 30.3 percent from year-ago level of P25.5 billion.



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PLDT favors VAT rate hike over tax on 'texting'

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. is asking the government to go easy in taxing the telecom sector.

The company said that of the proposed revenue measures affecting the industry, it was open only to the planned increase in the value-added tax rate.

The other planned measures seen to affect the telecom sector are the imposition of tax on text messaging and the revival of the franchise tax.

The Macapagal administration said it wanted to tax "the windfall profits" of the telecom companies as part of its P80-billion revenue reform package to address the budget deficit problem.

"An increase in VAT is the most acceptable proposal. The tax measures being proposed should not be too burdensome," said PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan.

The government wanted to impose anew a franchise tax of 5 percent on the gross sales of telecom companies. This is being considered as an alternative to the proposed 5-centavo to 20-centavo tax per text .message.

The government scrapped the franchise tax when VAT was introduced.

Also, economic planners were proposing an increase in the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12-14 percent. They are also considering a shift from the income tax system to the gross income-based system.

PLDT is one of the country's most profitable companies, due mainly to revenue contributions from its cash-rich subsidiary, Smart Communications Inc.

The telecom giant posted a record-breaking P12 billion in net income in the first half of the year, surpassing the whole of 2003's profit of P11.2 billion.

Pangilinan said his company was holding talks with the government as to how to approach the issue of additional taxes in a way that would not unduly burden a sector that had not only been remitting huge earnings to the state but providing economic opportunities for the country.

PLDT paid P9.7 billion in taxes last year and it was expected to pay P13 billion this year. Between 2005 and 2006, Pangilinan said tax payments of PLDT were expected to go up by about P6 billion.

Among the taxes paid by PLDT were the 32-percent corporate income tax, 20-percent withholding tax, 10-percent VAT and 10-percent overseas communications tax.

"The telecom sector is heavily taxed already. Taxing text messages might discourage some 25 million cellular phone subscribers from further using this service," said Smart president Napoleon Nazareno earlier.

Globe Telecom president Gerardo Ablaza Jr. had said that imposing a new tax on text messages would constitute double taxation.

Stop second-guessing ERC, courts asked

By Abigail L. Ho

ENERGY Secretary Vincent Perez is asking the courts to stop second-guessing the Energy Regulatory Commission on matters concerning the setting of rates for the power sector.

"We urge the judicial courts to stop interfering with the ERC. We call on (them) to allow petitions with regard to electricity rates to be referred back to the ERC, rather than the courts making their own unilateral pronouncements," he said in a briefing yesterday.

He said the issue on the ERC's approval of Lopez-led Manila Electric Co.'s petition to have its rates unbundled would have been resolved without much fanfare had the Court of Appeals decided to consult the ERC before handing down a ruling.

The appellate court last week junked an ERC order approving Meralco's unbundled rates. The same decision also stated that the ERC should urge Meralco to submit its books to the Commission on Audit for scrutiny.

This decision, according to Bagong Alyansang Makabayan spokesperson Renato Reyes Jr. was a victory for the people.

Meralco president and chief operating officer Jesus Francisco, however, said it would only hurt the poorest of the poor among Meralco customers, who were expected to benefit from the rate unbundling by way of lower rates or lifeline rates.

In addition, consumer watchdog Raul Concepcion, chair of the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said the Court of Appeals decision would only make the country's business environment more unpredictable.

This, he said, would drive away investors that were planning to sink their cash into some of the country's capital-intensive industries and sectors.

ADB offers help to avert power crisis

From page B1

this," he said.

He said the ADB was concerned that the country was facing potential shortfalls in power supply, prompting the government to seek more foreign investments.

"Now, we are concerned, the same as the government is concerned of the risk of a power shortage like what happened in the early '90s. So to try to avoid that, the ADB is sitting now with the government to see what are the options. Who is not scared to find the Philippines in the same situation as the early '90s?" he noted.

Giraud said the government was likewise taking a pro-active role "to ring the bell early enough."

Asked about the government's decision to absorb P500 billion worth of debts crippling Napocor, Giraud said: There is a macroeconomic impact of such decision that the government has to look at and we are also looking at that with the government. And there is a positive impact for the power sector because this would relieve the debt burden and you allow the power sector to start in a level ground."

Remarkable Sales Performance for LEGACY in first four months 2004

Sustains its growth in the face of the hard economic environment.

TOP 10 PRE-NEED COMPANIES

Based on Gross Contract Price January - April 2004

PRE-NEED FIRMS	AMOUNT OF SALES/ CONTRACT PRICE
PENSION SUB-TOTAL	6,256,727,433
• PHILAM PLANS, INC.	1,624,276,887
• PRUDENTIALIFE PLANS, INC.	988,847,274
• CAP PENSION	591,884,734
• PACIFIC PLANS, INC.	537,098,916
• MANULIFE FINANCIAL PLANS, INC	385,553,692
9 LEGACY CONSOLIDATED PLANS, INC.	259,423,996
• LEGACY CONSOLIDATED PLANS, INC.	259,423,996
• TPG CORPORATION	140,883,258

Source: SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

InsuranceWord 7

Legacy Consolidated Plans, Inc. has registered a record breaking gross sales for pension plan of Php 259,423,996 for the first four months of 2004, according to the recent Pre-Need Sales Collection report released by the Securities and Exchange Commission. This was achieved inspite of the difficult economic environment and has been consistent with the company's continuous growth in recent years. In fact, Legacy is only one of the few companies to show growth in sales in the pre-need industry. The robust sales performance of Legacy has further solidified its position in number 9 among the pre-need pension companies in the country today. Judging by the company's current sales trend, Celso De Los Angeles, Chairman of Legacy Consolidated Plans, Inc. is confident that the gross sales will reach over a billion pesos by end of the year. De Los Angeles attributes the remarkable growth of Legacy to its innovative products and services which cater to the growing needs of planholders. It has received recognition from various award-giving institutions for its outstanding performance and service

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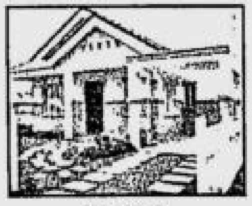
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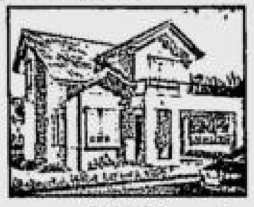
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MANILA

SN ANDRES MANILA Bnew Twnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge P3.355M up 8903461 loc 34

MAKATI

1.6M C5 Nr The Fort
12T/mo. or 3Yrs No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mkti 0917-8313226

MKT NR AYALA Bnew Twnhse /3stry/3br/2-2 1/2tb/grge P3.285M up 8903461 loc 34

PASAY

Condo 34sqm Harrison Mansion PasayT# 024716398 & 0927753285 Harry

PASIG

LONG TERM ZERO INTEREST 123BR NR ULTRA T672-1463

QUEZON CITY

BELICIA HOMES
Teachers Village
(# 73 Matimtiman St.)
Southwing now,
accepting reservation
P2.8M only
All concrete 3BR; 3TB
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HLURB Lic. to Sell 09080

CUBAO P1.5M 5YRS TO PAY No Interest Move-In 9126976

Only 6254/mo; 20%DP 1Y TP 2926137, 09178160250

SACRIFICE SALE! Katipunan walking distance Ateneo LA67 FA104 3.6M 3BR Installment, or cash w/ discount Call 09185494882

LAGUNA

Sta. Rosa 3BR Thse FA110 Amor 9114071/266 or 9124724

COMML/RESDL

PASIG

PRIME PROPERTY
418sqm 5Dr 2Sty Apt. Infrnt of Pamantasan ng Lunsod ng Pasig 09189422422•09178212826

HOUSE & LOT

LAS PINAS

Las Pinas Philam 8M LA 416 Sqm 2Sty 5 Big BR 5T&B 3CG Owner Leaving Jerry 8742629

MANILA

Singalong Manila BnewTwnhse /3stry/3br/maid's rm1-2grge P3.960M up 8903461 loc. 34

MARIKINA

Bnew 4BR 3TB 2.8M 9487112

QUEZON CITY

★124 SCT. CASTOR ★ +/★★
★136 SCT. LOZANO ★ +/★★
5BR5TB 9210255 9219967

★81Mahiyain Teacher's Vill. 5BR5TB 9210255 ; 9219967

★NR EASTWOOD LIBIS 5BR 4TB LA400 FA320 famly rm corner 12M nego 9120312

P499T/Unit Sunny Villas Condo nr Cmnwealth 30/60M² P4730/mo 8179650/9750•09192302120

OTHER AREAS

Tagaytay Canyon Woods FF fa234 la884 15M neg DBO Bnew cleantile 0927-2698179

LOT

PARANAQUE

Sucat 240m² 715-8833 Emy

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

QUEZON CITY

Acropolis 384;414;657;746m² P30-38T/sq.m. 6337601-03

CAVITE

1133 sqm Taywanac Alfonso Cavite Nr. Tagaytay Call Linda 7232935

LAGUNA

•STA. ROSA Beside LaSalle• nr Sts. Scho & Malls 120m²-up P90T Down Low Mo.No Int. 6609372

PROVINCIAL

★100% TAGAYTAY ★
240m²-up 3,750/m² 135T D/P 6T Mo Best Loc nr Taal Vista 6609372

MEMORIAL LOT

Heritage Park 634-1212

FARM/FISHPEN/RAWLANDS

Mango Orchard CagayanDeOro 3.2M Direct Buyer 0918-2534858

TANAY MANGO 6HA 9202753

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

2BR FUR CTR PARK 8447524

MANILA

CONDO/APT 5636296/5610197

APARTMENT

QUEZON CITY

34 YALE CUBAO 9310449

ROOM & BOARD

250 MLA 7229981;4113301

•FURNISH PASAY 8872865•

BEDSPACE

A/C RM for 4prsn 2400ea 9530642

Men A/C RM 2800ea 9530043

LOAN & MORTGAGE

2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

BUSN DOC OFW 524-3197

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

50 SQM UMC BLDG 900 UN AVE ERMITA TEL 5211114

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

MITSUBISHI

RUSH SALE LANCER GLXI SPORTY LOOK Floaded 2727813

NISSAN

'02 SERENA 1st Own P850T 12900mileage 0920-9112910

Nissan Patrol 2002 White A/T • 0917-4061980•

RUSH 04 SERENA QRV 8TKMS V-CHEAP 775T S-USED 8995503

TOYOTA

Black 02 Altis 4548894 09203784505

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FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE EXISTENCE AND SUCCESSFUL PURCHASE OF THE TOTAL CONTENTS OF BUNKER (NOT BODEGA) CONTAINING NICKLE BABBITT / LEAD MARKED AS AMERICAN SMELTING & REFINING CO.
CONFIDENTIALITY STRICTLY ENFORCED

CONTACT NO'S. (083) 552-4507
CELL NO. (0920) 489-1117

CONTINUING COMMISSION'S IN SOME CASES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given to the public that three (3) Official Receipts with serial number 15334, 16299 and 16300 of Ford Balintawak/ Quezon Avenue has been missing.

Any unauthorized used of the said official receipts is unauthorized and will be punished by law accordingly.

FORD BALINTAWAK/QUEZON AVENUE
EDSA corner Seminary Road, Balintawak, Quezon City

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

SPECIAL CARS

AUDI A4 1.8 2002 Turbo Tiptronic Sedan 21000 Mileage Rhemy 9111883-84

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

CarsVans CoasterBus 422-9296

CARS/VANS/BRIDAL 8969956

Cheap Van Rental 9330311

MB 7415897•09208328657

NISSAN Urvan 0917-5444721

P800/L3 9136710 / 4333682

Toyco U Drive Coaster / Car Vans Rental • 8023022 or 21

ABC RENT A CAR
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CRLA • CRV • LYNX • 536-8822
303-9789 • 426-2278 • 426-4084

CAR SERVICE

CAR PAINTING CAR BODY REPAIR HOME SERVICE RETOUCH HILAMOS 4571196

CAR LOAN

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523/24

1.5% 1HR CAR LOAN 3743803

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 533-8254

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6567685

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

BUY/SELL

Educ Plan - 2528373 Ramona

EDUC PLAN Gie 7800106

EDUC'L PLAN Dang 8061574

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Control Ur Weight 09178273404

Control weight now 3756988

SLIMMING PROGRAM 5221138

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PETS

Dog Trainer 0919-2050952

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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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ATTN:CEBU CITY RESIDENTS Extra Income 032-2641982 Nico

Dollar 5.7%/yr. Net
10yr Term Min 2T 0920-9090749

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8531008 09178901851 Arlene

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Extraincome upto P10k/mo7423327

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OFC STAFF 09196913491 IRA

Sales Rep M&F 4 Company Uniform & M T O 4840103/5210527

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY

The Bids and Awards Committee – Head Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP/G-EPS registered companies/contractors and other interested suppliers to a public bidding for the supply and installation of carpet tiles for the proposed rehabilitation and upgrading of the Assembly Hall, 3/F Cafetorium Building with an estimated area of 1,230 sq.m. per BSP floor plan and specifications.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is P2,029,500.00

Interested bidders shall submit the following eligibility requirements on or before **13 AUGUST 2004** at the BAC Secretariat, Rm. 212, 2nd Floor, 5-Story Building, BSP Main Complex, Malate, Manila.

1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers
2. Y2003 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet)
3. Y 2003 Income Tax Return
4. Taxpayer's Identification Number
5. Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License
6. Prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, ie., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts, or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or a cash deposit certificate in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows; NFCC = [(Current assets – Current liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects; K = 10.
7. Duly notarized statement that the firm is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, Corporation.
8. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check.
9. Duly notarized certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original.
10. Sworn affidavit of the bidder that he or she or any officer of their corporation is not related to the Head of the Procuring Entity by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.
11. List of completed projects indicating project cost and nature of work undertaken as proof that the bidder has at least five (5) years experience as carpet tiles installer on interior work projects requiring high-end finishes and excellent workmanship, such as 5-star hotels, universal banks, executive offices, meeting rooms, theaters and auditoriums. (The Bank reserves the right to verify/inspect the completed projects)
12. Copies of contracts for at least three (3) completed projects for the last five (5) years of similar technology, complexity and magnitude as that of the project costing at least P1.5 million per project.
13. Certification of authorized dealership or distributorship from manufacturer of carpet tiles.
14. A certification that in case of award, bidder shall post a warranty bond for a period of three (3) years after acceptance of work
15. Brochure or sample of offer.

Those who comply with the above and whose product offer meets the requirement will be invited to a bidding to be conducted at a later date to be advised.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat at Tel. Nos. 523-6427 and 524-7011 local 2228.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

(Sgd.) Ma. DOLORES B. YUVIENCO
Chairperson

(PDI – August 5, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
Bids and Awards Committee for
Information Technology (BAC-IT)
Quezon City

July 29, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

Name of Project	:	PROCUREMENT OF TWO HUNDRED NINETY-FIVE (295) LASER PRINTERS
Location of the Project	:	Bureau of Internal Revenue
Contract Duration	:	Thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of Notice of Award
Approved Budget	:	P10,325,000.00
Source of Funding	:	e-Government Fund

All interested parties may obtain the bidding documents from the BAC-II Secretariat, c/o Room 605, 6/F, BIR-National Office Bldg., BIR Road, Brgy. Piñahan, Diliman, Quezon City starting July 29, 2004, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P2,100.00.

Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **August 12, 2004,** Thursday at **2:00 p.m.,** at the **Executive Conference Room**, 3/F BIR-National Office Building, BIR Road, Brgy. Piñahan, Diliman, Quezon City

Deadline for the submission of eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals shall be on **August 24, 2004, Tuesday** at 1:30 p.m., to be held at the Executive Conference Room, 3/F BIR-National Office Building, BIR Road, Brgy. Piñahan, Diliman, Quezon City to be followed by the opening of the bids.

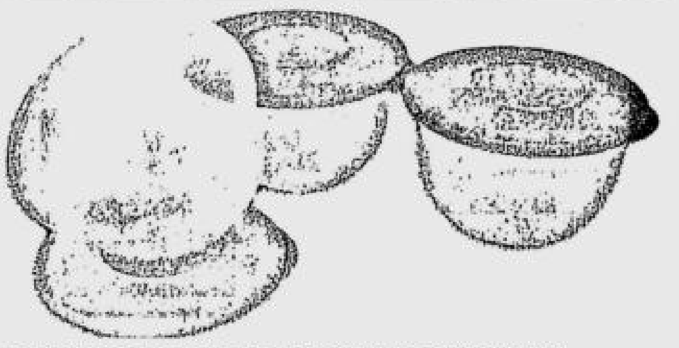
All particulars relative to eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids, post-qualification and award of contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and its implementing rules and regulations.

The BIR assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any excuse or loss that they may incur in the preparation of their bids. The BIR also reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any of the required formality therein and accept the bids most advantageous to the government.

For particulars, please inquire from the BAC-IT Secretariat, thru the Chief, SSTMD IPQS at Room 302, 3/F, Revenue Computer Center (RCC) Bldg., BIR Compound, BIR Road, Brgy. Piñahan, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone nos. 981-7085, 927-4101(telefax), 981-7079 and 981-7080 or e-mail us at lilibeth.maranan@bir.gov.ph.

(Sgd.) ATTY. LEONOR S. VILLALON-ROGERS
Assistant Commissioner - HRDS
Chairman, BAC-IT

(PDI – July 29 & August 5, 2004)



FREE TUPPERWARE FROM BAYANTEL

Organize your weekend parties better with the handy Tupperware Potluck Bowl Set that you can get for free from BayanTel! A minimum of P650.00 worth of calls to any cellphone or NDD calls to a landline from your BayanTel line entitles the subscriber to the free Tupperware Potluck Bowl Set. Just present your statement of account for the month of August together with proof of payment / official receipt and any valid ID to a customer service representative in any Bayan Center in Metro Manila to claim your prize. Subscribers can redeem their prize from August 1 to October 31, 2004 only.

Acoustic Dreams concluded Miriam's environmental week

MIRIAM College has just concluded its environmental week with a concert entitled "Acoustic Dreams @ Miriam " featuring Paolo Santos, Akafellas and the Unwind last July 17, 2004 held at the High School covered court. Sponsored by 101.9 For Life, The Philippine Daily Inquirer, JB Music and Sports Company, Don-Jon Guitar International, Urban SPA and Star Paper Corporation. The concert is for the benefit of the Social Action Programs of Miriam College.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
OLD MIA ROAD, PASAY CITY
METRO MANILA

A Century of bringing the Filipinos closer together through better transportation & communications

IN RE : PETITION FOR AUTHORITY TO
IMPOSE FUEL SURCHARGE
OF US$10.00 PER SECTOR ON
PASSENGER TICKETS

CAB CASE NO. EP-25002

EMIRATES,
Petitioner

x-----------------------------------x

NOTICE OF HEARING

Pursuant to the provisions of RA 776, as amended, Notice is hereby given that **EMIRATES** has filed with the Civil Aeronautics Board a petition for approval of authority to impose fuel surcharge on passenger of US$10.00 per sector on passenger tickets. The above-entitled case is scheduled for hearing on August 18, 2004 at 10:00 AM at the CAB Conference Room, Old MIA Road, Pasay City before the undersigned at which the applicant shall present relevant evidence.

The applicant is hereby required to have this Notice of Hearing be published at least once two (2) weeks before the scheduled hearing in a newspaper of general circulation.

Let a copy of the petition and this Notice be posted at the CAB Bulletin Board beginning today.

27 July 2004.
Pasay City, Philippines

(Sgd.) **JOCELYN VILLAR-ALTAMIRA**
Hearing Officer

Copy furnished:

ATTY. JORGE B.D. GONZALES, JR.
Counsel for the Petitioner
12th Floor, East Tower
Philippine Stock Exchange Center
Exchange Road, Ortigas Center
Pasig City

Atty. Roberto C.O. Lim
Counsel for PAL
9/F, PAL Center, Legaspi St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

Atty. Raquel T. Luis-Dimalanta
Director-Legal Affairs
Cebu Pacific Air
Airlines Operations Center
Domestic Road, Pasay City

Atty. Andres M. Bolinas
Legal Department
Air Philippines Corporation
APC Gate I, Andrews Avenue, Pasay City

(PDI–Aug. 5, 2004)

HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG FUND) is inviting all Suppliers/ Distributors to a Public Bidding the Supply and Delivery of Various Computer Peripherals with an Approved Budget Ceiling of **Eleven Million Three Hundred Thousand Eighteen and 00/100 (P11,300,018.00) Pesos.**

Eligibility Requirements, Terms of Reference and Bid forms may be obtained from the Procurement Section, Task Force-General Services 7th floor Atrium of Makati Building, Makati Ave., Makati City starting **August 4, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Five Hundred and 00/ 100 (P2,500.00) Pesos.**

All interested Suppliers/Distributors are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference which shall be held on **August 13, 2004** at the HDMF Multi-Purpose Hall, Rm. 602, 6th floor, The Atrium of Makati Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Opening of Bids is tentatively scheduled on **August 25, 2004** at the HDMF Multi-Purpose Hall, Rm 602, 6th floor, The Atrium of Makati Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

The HDMF reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informality or accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the Fund. Further, the HDMF assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses or losses that may be incurred in participating in this bidding.

For further inquiries and/or information, please call Mr. Cesar V. Racoma/Mr. Nazario U. Benedicto at 811-42-62, 894-58-15 or visit our Corporate Website at http://www.pagibigfund.gov.ph or e-mail us at hdmfgpis@info.com.ph.

(Sgd.) **EMMA LINDA B. FARIA**
Senior Vice President, Technical Support Group
Chair, BAC-GS

(PDI – Aug. 5 & 11, 2004)

JOBMarket ONLINE VISIT US AT www.jobmarketonline.com

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(REBIDDING)

The National Food Authority (NFA) invites authorized distributors/suppliers and manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for 60 ton electronic truckscale in the following areas:

Lot	Qty	Project Type	Place	Approved Budget
1	1 unit	60 Ton Pitless Type	Rosales, Pangasinan	P 9,600,000.00
	1 unit	60 Ton Pit Type	Tikay, Malolos City	
	1 unit	60 Ton Pitless Type	Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga	
2	1 unit	60 Ton Pitless Type	Antipolo City	P 9,600,000.00
	1 unit	60 Ton Pitless Type	Sablayan, Occ. Mindoro	
	1 unit	60 Ton Pitless Type	Pili, Camarines Sur	

The schedule of bidding activities are as follows:

Bidding Activities	Date
Issuance of Eligibility Requirements & Bid Documents	August 6 to 13, 2004
Pre-Bidding Conference	August 20, 2004 10:00 AM
Submission and Opening of Bids	September 2, 2004
–Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Bids	Deadline: 10:00 AM

Each bidder shall enclose a Bidder's Security in any of the following Schedule of Amount

A.	Cash, Manager's Check, Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit or Bank Draft	1% of the Approved Budget
B.	Bank Guarantee	1.5% of the Approved Budget
C.	Surety Bond	2.5% of the Approved Budget
D.	Foreign Guarantee	100% of the Approved Budget

Eligibility requirements and Bidding Documents may be secured from the BAC Secretariat at the following offices:

- NFA Central Office, 5th Floor, OAAS, Tel. No. 712-1701 (Ray)
- NFA Regional Office, Cabanatuan City, Tel. No. (044) 463-1233 (William)

Bidding documents shall be issued only to interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P6,000.00 per lot.

It is required that the prospective bidders must have a single largest contract – completed within the last five (5) years and similar to the contract to be bidded – whose value, adjusted to current prices must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.

Venue for the Pre-Bidding Conference for both Lots will be at the NFA-HRMD Training Room, 7th Floor Central Office. Submission and Opening of Bids shall be at the **National Food Authority, Regional Office, Cabanatuan City Farmers Training Center for both Lots.**

NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formality in the bids received, provided that such waiver does not refer to a major deviation in a bid and to accept only such bids which are advantageous to the government.

NFA assume no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their respective bid.

(Sgd.) **JESSUP P. NAVARRO**
Asst. Adm. for Stabilization and
Chairman, BAC for Luzon

(PDI – August 5 & 12, 2004)

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES LOS BAÑOS
College, Laguna 4031

INVITATION TO BID

The University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) invites interested parties to submit sealed bids for the public bidding of X-Ray Machine and Ultrasound Machine for the University Health Service (UHS) with an approved budget of 2 M and 1.5 M, respectively.

Interested parties may secure bid documents and the checklist of qualification requirements from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat (BAC-SEC) Office at the International House Complex, UP, Los Baños upon payment of a bidding fee of Php 200.00.

The schedule of bidding activities is as follows:

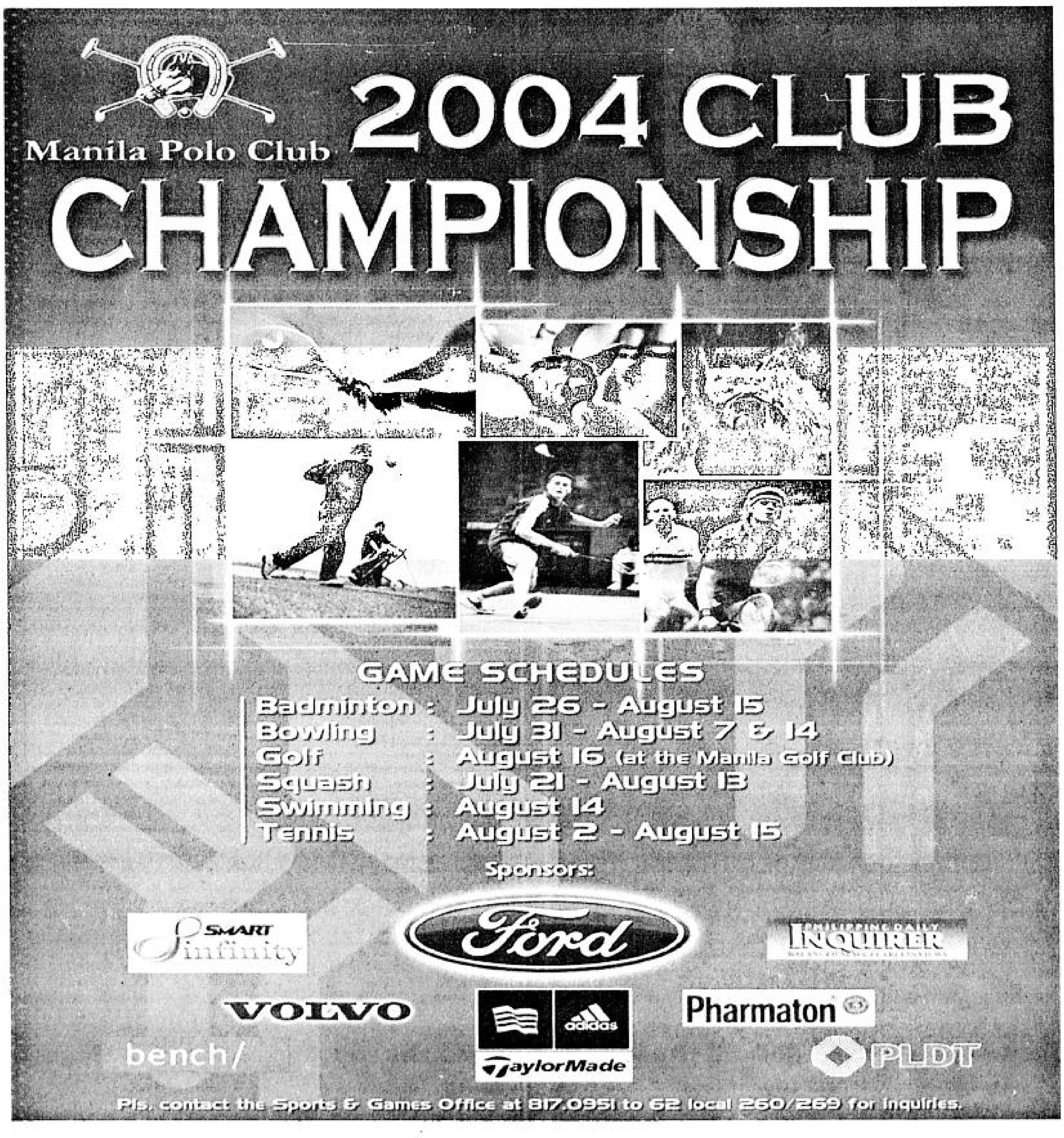
Particulars	Date/Time	Place
Issuance of Bid Documents	**August 16-23**/8:30 am - 5 pm	BAC-SEC
Submission of Pre-bid Reqm'ts	**August 25, 2004**/ Up to 4:30 pm	BAC-SEC
Pre-Bid Conference	**August 27, 2004** Fri./2:30 pm	BAC-SEC
Opening/Submission of Bids	**September 3, 2004** Fri./2:30 pm	BAC-SEC

The UPLB reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any effect therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the UPLB. The UPLB likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

Inquiries may be forwarded to Alessandro Manilay, BAC Secretariat at telephone no. (49) 536-8419 or (49) 536-8420.

(Sgd.) **TERESITA M. ESPINO**
Chair, BAC

(PDI--Aug. 5 & 12, 2004)


Manila Polo Club
2004 CLUB
CHAMPIONSHIP

GAME SCHEDULES
Badminton : July 26 - August 15
Bowling : July 31 - August 7 & 14
Golf : August 16 (at the Manila Golf Club)
Squash : July 21 - August 13
Swimming : August 14
Tennis : August 2 - August 15

Sponsors:

Pls. contact the Sports & Games Office at 817.0951 to 62 local 260/269 for inquiries.

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Date : July 28, 2004
Contract No. BCMD 2004-002R

1. Contract No.: BCMD 2004-002R — Supply and Delivery of One (1) Unit of Brand New, Multi-Role, Single-Engine Helicopter for TransCo
2. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of supplying and delivering a Helicopter to TransCo Hangar, General Aviation Area, Domestic Airport, Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines.
3. The Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid from the Internal Cash Generation is P83,000,000.00.
4. Application for Eligibility is open to Filipino and Foreign manufacturers, suppliers/dealers, distributors who have the legal, technical and financial requisites of the contract to be bid.
5. Foreign bidders who wish to participate in the procurement of goods must prove that their respective country of origin grant reciprocal rights to Filipino citizens with respect to procurement of goods by its government, in compliance with R.A. No. 5183.
6. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be included by TransCo in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the supplier's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Post qualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright.
7. Eligibility & Bid Documents will be available for issuance on July 29, 2004 at the **Bids and Contract Management Department,** Ground Floor, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City 1104, Telefax No.: 921-23-08 upon presentation of Letter of Intent and a payment of non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.
8. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility Forms, statements and Bid Proposals (Technical and Price) shall be on or before September 10, 2004, 1:30 P.M. and shall be submitted at the MMD Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Building, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road TransCo, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila.

   If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working holiday, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission shall not be accepted. Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on August 25, 2004 at the same venue.
9. Manufacturers, suppliers/dealers, distributors not yet included in the TransCo's List of registered Suppliers/Contractors, who wish to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/screening, are requested to register with the registration office mentioned above by submitting the following basic requirements, duly notarized, which should be maintained current and updated at least once a year. A certificate of Registration will be issued to suppliers/ contractors upon approval.
   – Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business name registration or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate, as appropriate;
   – Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year;
   – Taxpayer's Identification Number;
   – Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation;
   – Audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt;

   For foreign bidders, the required documents applicable to entities doing business in the Philippines shall be substituted by the appropriate equivalent documents issued by foreign bidder's country, which documents shall be duly acknowledged and/or authenticated by the Philippine Consulate thereat.

   Note : Prospective bidders are allowed to submit the above requirements together with their Eligibility Forms and Documents during the deadline for the submission of Eligibility requirements and Bid proposals (Technical and Price)
10. TransCo reserves the right to reject any application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
11. The Contract to be bid shall be governed by the Provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.
12. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **DOMINADOR S. GEONZON**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – July 29 & August 5, 2004)

PUBLIC ESTATES AUTHORITY
7TH FLOOR LEGASPI TOWERS 200,
PASEO DE ROXAS, CITY OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 817-4711 • 817-4712 • 817-4713
817-5017 • 817-5018 • 817-5014 • 813-1441/46
FAX (632) 815-2662 • 815-2660 • 817-3127
ZIP CODE 1226

2004

INVITATION FOR RE-BIDDING
HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR ALL QUALIFIED OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE PUBLIC ESTATES AUTHORITY AND THEIR DEPENDENTS

PEA is inviting health maintenance offices to submit pre-qualification documents for the re-bidding of the health care services for all qualified officers and employees of PEA and their dependents. Pre-qualified bidders are automatically considered to participate in this rebidding.

Interested parties may acquire pre-qualification forms from the Office of the Chairman of the BAC, 8th Floor, Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City from **August 02 to 06, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00.

The duly accomplished pre-qualification documents must be received on or before 5:00 p.m., **August 9, 2004** at the Office of the Chairman of the BAC, 8th Floor, Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

The approved budget cost for the health care services is P1,760,000.00, chargeable against the PEA Personnel Services Benefits fund. The contract for health care services shall commence on **September 1, 2004 to August 31, 2005.**

Pre-bid conference shall be held on **August 18, 2004** at 10:00 a.m. at the PEA Conference Room. Deadline of submission of bids will be on **August 23, 2004** at 2:00 p.m. and the opening of bids will be at 2:15 p.m. of the same day.

Insurance Brokers/Agents will not be entertained in this re-bidding.

The PEA reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any formality or technicality and to award to the bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **ARMINDA A. ALARAS**
Chairman, BAC

Approved:
(Sgd.) **TEODORICO C. TAGUINOD**
General Manager/CEO

(PDI - July 31 & Aug. 5, 2004)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF SCRAP / JUNK ITEMS
"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : **August 18, 2004**, 2:00 PM simultaneously at the Aplaya DPP Office, Jasaan, Misamis Oriental Province and at Solarium Multi-Purpose Hall, Ground Floor, Bldg. 1, NPC-Head Office, Agham Rd. corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following unserviceable items:

	Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1.	One (1) lot: unserviceable and Junk plant parts, Corroded-drums, used magnet / stator wires, Discarded-batteries, junk vehicles, used tires, all located at the Radiator Area, Warehouse, Motor Pool, Tank Farm and Helipad Area of the Aplaya Diesel Power Plant, Jasaan, Misamis Oriental Prov.	P 1,108,000.00 / lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. **PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.**
2. **LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN 2003 ORIGINAL (OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY) FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY. ORIGINALS MUST BE PRESENTED.**

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. at Materials Management Department, Ground Floor, Building-1, NPC Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384. **Deadline for issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 PM August 17, 2004.**

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) **FELIX B. TACATA, JR.**
OIC-MMD

(PDI – August 4, 5 & 6, 2004)

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Day before publication

Senator Arturo M. Tolentino

Constitutionalist, Statesman and Public Servant
September 19, 1910 – August 2, 2004

He peacefully met his Creator at the age of 93.

He is survived by his bereaved wife **CONSTANCIA CONDE TOLENTINO**, his children **DR. MA. BERNARDITA & GREGORIO H. GABRIEL JR., ATTY. SALVADOR C. TOLENTINO, ARTURO VICTORIO C. TOLENTINO, DR. ARTURO & EMMA TOLENTINO, EVELYN & GUS MENDOZA**; his grandchildren and great grandchildren; his brother **HELENO & LEONOR TOLENTINO**, sisters **BENITA VERSOZA, ELISEA BAUTISTA, IRENEA & JESUS CONCEPCION, JULITA & ERIBERTO AGUIRRE**. His family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Sanctuario de San Jose, Duke St., East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

Necrological services will be held on August 5, 2004 at the Philippine Senate at 10:30 a.m. and at the Department of Foreign Affairs at 2:30 p.m.

Interment will be on Saturday, August 7, 2004 at the La Loma Cemetery.

Blessed are the merciful; for they will obtain mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.
Matthew 5:7 and 8

In Loving Memory of

MA. ASUNCION "MARICHU" RODRIGUEZ-TINGA

(1 September 1939 – 5 August 1996)

On The Eight Anniversary of Her Demise

A special Holy Mass will be offered at 6 p.m., today at the St. Michael's Chaplaincy, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

Holy Masses will also be offered today at the following churches:

Sagrada Familia Church, Taguig	6 a.m.
Our Lady of the Poor, Taguig	9 a.m.
St. John Bosco Church, Makati	12:15 p.m.
Sto. Niño Church, Taguig	6 p.m.
St. Alphonsus de Liguori Church, Magallanes, Makati	6 p.m.
Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Anne, Taguig	6 p.m.
St. Martin de Porres Church, Parañaque	6:30 p.m.

Her loving husband **Dante**, children **Freddie, Ampi, Danju, Jonathan, Cecille** and **Rica**, daughter-in-law **Kaye**, son-in-law **Norman**; grandchildren, brother **Ely** and sister **Vicky**; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law request relatives, friends and pious readers to continuously remember her in their prayers.

---

tinga

ENGR. RODOLFO FELIPE ALMARIO

Of Masbate and Quezon City

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord last August 3 at the age of 67.

A retired officer of the Bureau of Customs, he is survived by his wife, Lourdes, Auditor V of the Commission on Audit and four children, **Melissa, Mariquit, Soraya** and **Michael Angelo**; three grandsons; and siblings **Alejandro, Manuel, Benjamin, Eva** and **Dominador.**

His remains lie in state at Our Lady of Consolation Parish Church in Tierra Pura, Subdivision, Tandang Sora, Q.C. Internment will take place on Monday, August 29, at the Himlayan Pilipino Cemetery in Tandang Sora.

"Only goodness and love will pursue me all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come..."
Psalm 23:6

PERLA HIZON-CRUZ

Peacefully joined our Creator
on August 3, 2004 at the age of 72.

Mr. Daniel Espiritu Cruz, together with family: **Joyce & Rene, Noreen & Shubert, Jun & Marion, Jane & Rey, Dandy** and grandchildren **Joseph, Jennifer, Eunice, Timothy, Erika, Ysabel, Danic, Pio** and **Reine** request for your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City and will be brought to Pulilan, Bulacan on August 8, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. for a one-hour viewing at the Chapel of San Francisco de Asis.

Final interment will be at the Municipal Cemetery of Pulilan, Bulacan.

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..." — Psalm 21:15

The Officers and Members of the Board of Directors and Staff of the

PHILIPPINES SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

express their sincerest sympathy to the family of

ATTY. JESUS R. CORNAGO

Director and Legal Counsel

Died on August 3, 2004

His mortal remains lie in state at the
Our Lady of Peace Memorial Chapel
Antipolo City

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City;
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San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
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243 A.B. Fernandez Ave., Dagupan City, Pangasinan
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CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City;
Tel. 732-0309; 732-1095
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COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
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Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
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Tels. 740-2683; 781-3705, 781-3688; 413-9400; 715-5594
DALLUAY MEMORIAL SERVICES
#42 Upper Kalaklan, Olongapo City
Tels. (047) 222-3605; (047) 811-1086;
(047) 222-4512; (047) 224-2014
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DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
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Manuguit, Manila
Tels. 712-5102; 741-5125; 741-5133; Fax No. 711-3064
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Tels. 895-1011 to 19
LOYOLA MEMORIAL PARK CHAPELS & CREMATORY SERVICES
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Tañong, Marikina City
Tels. 941-3196 to 98; 941-3676; Telefax 941-3577
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3-A Coronado St., Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City
Tel 890-63-18
MARIAN MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Marcos Hiway, Antipolo, Rizal; Tels. 645-1855
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MT. SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL
Arellano St., Dagupan City; Tels. (075) 515-5960;
522-8783; (0917) 520-5001
NACIONAL MEMORIAL HOMES
264 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City; Tels. 713-5231 to 35; 714-0867; 714-0868
OLONGAPO MEMORIAL PARK
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Tel. No. (047) 223-1692
OUR LADY OF PEACE MEMORIAL PARK CHAPEL & SERVICES, INC.
No. 6 Carigma St., Antipolo City 1870
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Johem Foods in Wofex

JOHEM'S FOOD operates Taipan Grill, a subsidiary of Colossal Food Processing Phils and MCN Distributor's Co. Talpan Grill has come up with new products destined to set a new trend in the food business. Health conscious consumers will be pleased to know that taro contains 60 calories per 100 gram serving as compared to potato which has 77 calories per 100 gram serving. Visit Johem Foods at Booth #349 in Wofex 2004 from Aug. 4 to 7 at the World Trade Center. For more info on Wofex, call Premier Events Plus Group Inc at 426-4209, 929-7993 or 63, 436-4209 or visit www.wofex.com.

Karate World Cup

THE ASSOCIATION for the Advancement of Karatedo (AAK) announced that all is set for its hosting of the 13th Koi Karate World Cup to be held at the Megatrade Halls 1, 2, and 3 of SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City on Aug. 13 to 15. Competitions will be held in kata and kumite events for male and female Karateka from 8 years old to over 35 years old (veterans). There are a total of 47 events. Prior to the World Cup, an International Training Course and Instructors seminar will be attended by all competitors, their coaches and instructors. This will be held at the St. Benilde Gym of La Salle Greenhills from Aug. 9 to 12 from 5 to 9 p.m. Another seminar for referees will be held at the conference room of Edsa Shangri-La Hotel from 2 to 4 p.m. on Aug. 9 to 12.

Diamond open house

DIAMOND Divisoria Shopping Center the newest shopping mall at the heart of Divisoria, will soon open its ground floor just in time for the Christmas shopping fever. They offer investment opportunities no other malls have. Aug. 7, is Grand Investor's Day where clients can still get units at the old price. Diamond Divisoria Shopping Center, will open its ground floor to the market by the end of October this year. Diamond Divisoria is located beside the Tutuban Mall and is fronting Claro M. Recto corner Dagupan St. The Shopping Center will consist of 6 floors. Diamond Divisoria is unique in that stalls which are on Leasehold can be converted to CCT.

BPI exec honored

MERVYN Encanto, executive vice president for international banking of the Philippine National Bank, was chosen as one of the 100 most outstanding graduates of San Agustin University in Iloilo. He was one of three awardees for banking and finance. The award was presented to the honorees in a ceremony held at the San Agustin Chapel last July 17, celebrating the centenary of the university. Encanto graduated Salutatorian of his high school class in San Agustin in 1961. He studied AB Political Science in the University of the Philippines in Iloilo and took up law in UP Diliman. He belongs to Class 1969 College of Law. He was president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines from 1993 to 1995 and LawAsia from 1999 to 2000.

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2 ELLA ENCHANTED
3 WEREWOLF (GINGERSNAPS 2)
4 CATWOMAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
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2 GARFIELD
3 I, ROBOT
4 WEREWOLF (GINGERSNAPS 2)
5 ELLA ENCHANTED
6 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

1 CATWOMAN
2 ELLA ENCHANTED
3 PRINCE & ME
4 I, ROBOT

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS
8066888

1 ETERNAL SUNSHINE
2 ELLA ENCHANTED
3 GARFIELD THE MOVIE
4 DEAD PEOPLE
5 AROUND THE WORLD
6 KING ARTHUR
7 CATWOMAN
8 LIBERATED 2
9 I, ROBOT
10 IMELDA

SM CITY BICUTAN
7763055

1 COLLATERAL
2 GARFIELD
3 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
4 I, ROBOT

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT
8294975

1 GARFIELD
2 I, ROBOT
3 CATWOMAN
4 DEAD PEOPLE

SM CITY BACOOR
(046)4173868

1 WEREWOLF (GINGERSNAPS 2)
2 ETERNAL SUNSHINE
3 CATWOMAN
4 ELLA ENCHANTED
5 GARFIELD
6 I, ROBOT
7 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
8 KING ARTHUR

SM CITY DASMA
(046) 4323201-04

1 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
2 GARFIELD
3 I, ROBOT
4 CATWOMAN

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7108977-80

1 CATWOMAN
2 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
3 MEAN GIRLS
4 KING ARTHUR

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU
(032) 2313876

1 I, ROBOT
2 KING ARTHUR
3 GARFIELD
4 PRINCE & ME
5 ELLA ENCHANTED
6 THE CURSED
7 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
8 CATWOMAN

SM CITY ILOILO
(033) 3209422

1 WEREWOLF (GINGERSNAPS 2)
2 RESERVED
3 KING ARTHUR
4 MEAN GIRLS
5 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
6 CATWOMAN
7 RESERVED
8 I, ROBOT

SM CITY DAVAO
(082) 2976998

1 WHOLE 10 YARDS
2 BULLET
3 DIRTY DANCING: HAVANA KNIGHTS
4 CATWOMAN
5 ELLA ENCHANTED
6 I, ROBOT

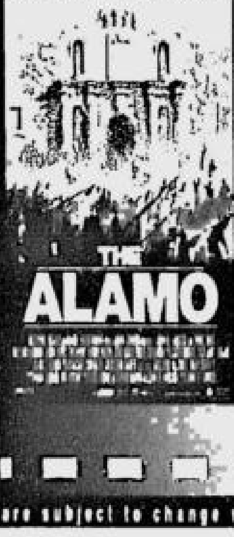
SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8592884

1 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
2 CATWOMAN
3 IMELDA
4 KING ARTHUR

THE PODIUM CINEMA

1
CATWOMAN
11:15 FS/11:45 MF/
2:00/4:15 LMF/6:05 END
COLLATERAL
6:30 FS/7:00 MF/9:40
LMF/11:45 END
2
GARFIELD
11:00 FS/11:20
MF/1:15/3:10/5:05/10:50
LMF/12:10 END

For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976
LATE NIGHT SCREENING
DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS


THE MOVIE EVENT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET.
THE ALAMO

SM CINEMA Critics' CHOICE

USA

AN SM CINEMA EXCLUSIVE

THE ALAMO

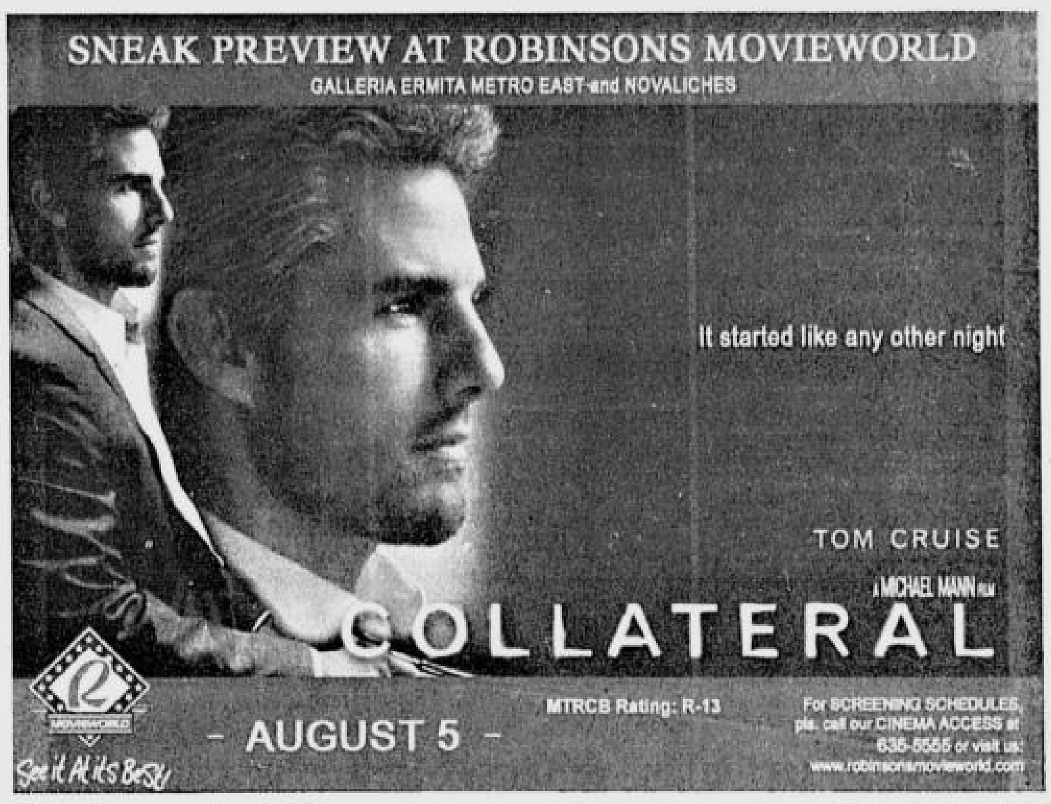
Dennis Quaid (The Day After Tomorrow) stars in this movie, set in the spring of 1836. Nearly 200 Texans – men of all races who believed in the future of Texas – held the fort for 13 days under siege by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, ruler of Mexico and commander of its forces. Led by three men – the young, brash Col. William Travis; the violent, passionate James Bowie; and the larger-than-life living legend David Crockett – the Texans and their deeds at the Alamo would pass into history as General Sam Houston's rallying cry for Texas independence and into legend for their symbolic significance.

Starts Aug. 4
SM Megamall
SM City Manila

MTRCB RATING: PG13
For Screening schedules, Dial 833.9999

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

SNEAK PREVIEW AT ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD
GALLERIA ERMITA METRO EAST and NOVALICHES



- AUGUST 5 -

MTRCB Rating: R-13

For SCREENING SCHEDULES, pls. call our CINEMA ACCESS at 635-5555 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

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MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangrila Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171

1 (DOLBY) GARFIELD
GP / FS : 12:15 PM, 2:25 PM, 4:35 PM, 6:45 PM, LMF : 8:55 PM
2 (DOLBY) I, ROBOT
PG -13 / FS : 12:40 PM, 3:20 PM
COLLATERAL R-13/7:00PM,LMF:9:30PM
3 (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
GP / FS : 12:50 PM, 3:05 PM, 5:20 PM, 7:35 PM, LMF : 9:50 PM
4 (DOLBY) SOON TO OPEN

PREMIERE

(DOLBY) IMELDA
GP / FS : 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 4:10 PM
COLLATERAL- R-13/7:35PM LMF:10:05PM)

isetann SUPER CINERAMA
CINERAMA COMPLEX RECTO
tel 733.4238

1. (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
2. GARFIELD
3. MAKAMUDO
4. ETERNAL SUNSHINE
5. LIBERATED - 2

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1 MAKAMUDO
2 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
3
4 (SDDS) PERLAS
5 GARFIELD
6 (DOLBY) I - ROBOT
7 (DTS) CATWOMAN
8 RESERVE
9 RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA 2000
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 MAKAMUDO
2 CATWOMAN
3 PERLAS

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 I - ROBOT
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) CATWOMAN
5 MAKAMUDO

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1 ANG GUSTO KO SA LALAKE
2 MAKAMUDO
3 GARFIELD
4 ETERNAL SUNSHINE
5 (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
6 I - ROBOT

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007

1 (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
2

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS) ALONG CAME POLLY
2 (SDDS) SPIDERMAN - 2
3 (DTS) I - ROBOT
4 GOLD (DTS) GARFIELD
5 GOLD (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
6 GOLD (SDDS) ETERNAL SUNSHINE
7 GOLD (DOLBY) ELLA ENCHANTED
8 DEAD PEOPLE
9 IMELDA
10 KING ARTHUR

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
ALIMALL CINEPLEX
Tel. 911-3101 loc. 8242 / 8281 / 8397

3 (Dolby) GARFIELD
4 (SDDS) I - ROBOT
5 (DTS) CATWOMAN
6 (Dolby) DEAD PEOPLE
7 (Dolby) ETERNAL SUNSHINE

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 CATWOMAN
2 GARFIELD
3 MAKAMUNDO
4

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 (DTS EX) CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
2 PRINCE & ME
3 (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
4 (DTS) GARFIELD

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
2 JERSEY GIRLS
3 (DOLBY) ALONG CAME POLLY
4 (DTS) I - ROBOT

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 KILL BILL - 2
2 BEAUTIFUL LIFE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
2 (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
3 (DOLBY) GARFIELD
4 (DOLBY) I - ROBOT

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1 I - ROBOT
2 PERLAS
3 (DTS) CATWOMAN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 PRINCE & ME
2 (DTS) ALONG CAME POLLY
3 (DOLBY) CATWOMAN
4 I - ROBOT

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 ALONG CAME POLLY
2 (DOLBY) I - ROBOT
3 (DTS) CATWOMAN
4 WEREWOLF (GINGER SNAP-2)

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 KING ARTHUR
2 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
3 (DOLBY) I - ROBOT

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
2 PRINCE & ME
3 (DOLBY) KING ARTHUR
4 (DTS) I - ROBOT

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3327

1 I - ROBOT
2 ALONG CAME POLLY
3 (DOLBY) CATWOMAN

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) KING ARTHUR
2 MAKAMUNDO
3 IMELDA
4 (DTS) 100 GIRLS

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) I - ROBOT
2 IMELDA
3 (DTS) CATWOMAN
4 PRINCE & ME
5 WEREWOLF (GINGER SNAP - 2)

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1 RESERVED
2 KILL BILL - 2
3 (DTS) CATWOMAN
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
2 ALONG CAME POLLY
3 AROUND THE WORLD
4 CATWOMAN

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 MAKAMUNDO
2 I - ROBOT

Shang Blockbuster Now Showing!

SHANG CINEPLEX

Shangri-La Plaza EDSA cor. Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City Tels. (632) 633-2227 or 6337851 LOC 171 www.shangrila-plaza.com

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

CINEMA ACCESS FOR ALL BRANCHES 635-5555
Visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

TOP MOVIE THEATER

Annual National Consumer's Quality Award 2003
Family Consumers Choice Award 2003

NOW SHOWING

GALLERIA 632-9115 to 16

CINEMA 1 THX — I, ROBOT 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

Cinema	Movie	Times
2	COLLATERAL	Sneak Preview
3	IMELDA	10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
4	ETERNAL SUNSHINE	10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
5	GARFIELD	11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
6	CATWOMAN	10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
7	DEAD PEOPLE	10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
8	ELLA ENCHANTED	12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
9	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS	11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40
10	ALONG CAME POLLY	11:40, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P150 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	GARFIELD	10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:40, 10:05
2	ELLA ENCHANTED	10:20, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40
3	CATWOMAN	10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
4		
5	DEAD PEOPLE	10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50
6	COLLATERAL	Sneak Preview
7	ETERNAL SUNSHINE	10:20, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	IMELDA	11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
2	GARFIELD	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 8:50, 10:35
3	CATWOMAN	11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 10:35
4	ELLA ENCHANTED	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
5	DEAD PEOPLE	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6	ETERNAL SUNSHINE	11:10, 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:10
7	I, ROBOT	11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 9:00
8	COLLATERAL	Sneak Preview

NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	COLLATERAL	Sneak Preview
2	CATWOMAN	10:15, 12:45, 3:15, 5:45, 8:30
3	I, ROBOT	12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:30
4	ALONG CAME POLLY	10:50, 12:50, 2:45, 4:40, 6:35, 8:30
5	SPIDER-MAN 2	11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40
6	ETERNAL SUNSHINE	11:00, 12:55, 2:50, 4:45, 6:40, 8:35
7	KING ARTHUR	11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40
8	MAKAMUNDO	11:00, 1:20, 3:40, 6:20, 8:30

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575

Cinema	Movie
1	I, ROBOT
2	CATWOMAN
3	GARFIELD
4	MAKAMUNDO

CAINTA 240-4661

Cinema	Movie
1	CATWOMAN
2	MAKAMUNDO
3	IMELDA
4	I, ROBOT

STA. ROSA (049)837-0907

Cinema	Movie
1	I, ROBOT
2	IMELDA
3	ALONG CAME POLLY
4	PERLAS
5	CATWOMAN

LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870

Cinema	Movie
1	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
2	CATWOMAN
3	ALONG CAME POLLY
4	BEAUTIFUL LIFE
5	KING ARTHUR

DASMARIÑAS 852-2125 / 416-4332

Cinema	Movie
1	THE EYE 2
2	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
3	I, ROBOT
4	GARFIELD
5	CATWOMAN

STARMILLS 875-1927 / 961-5270

Cinema	Movie
1	WEREWOLF
2	KAINAN SA HIGHWAY
3	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
4	ELLA ENCHANTED
5	GARFIELD
6	CATWOMAN

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858

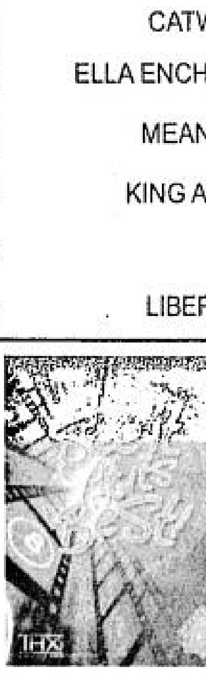
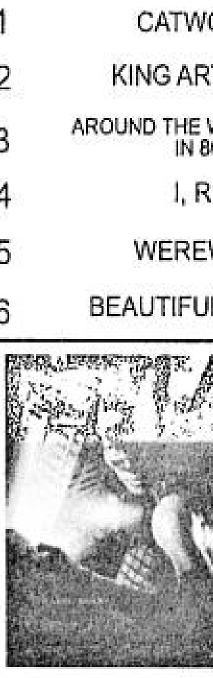
Cinema	Movie
1	WEREWOLF
2	GARFIELD
3	MAKAMUNDO
4	I, ROBOT
5	CATWOMAN
6	CATWOMAN

BACOLOD 441-0458/59

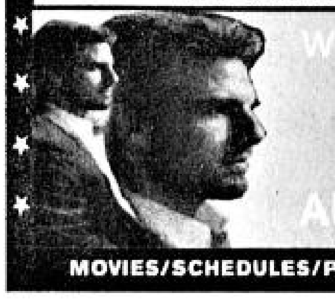
Cinema	Movie
1	CATWOMAN
2	ELLA ENCHANTED
3	MEAN GIRLS
4	KING ARTHUR
5	EVE
6	LIBERATED 2

ILOILO 336-8070/78

Cinema	Movie
1	CATWOMAN
2	KING ARTHUR
3	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
4	I, ROBOT
5	WEREWOLF
6	BEAUTIFUL LIFE

at ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD



watch the SNEAK PREVIEW of COLLATERAL at Robinsons Movieworld
AUGUST 5
GALLERIA ERMITA
METRO EAST NOVALICHES

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Bits Clips

PSLIS in Legaspi

THE PHILIPPINE Society of Librarians and Information Specialists (PSLIS) will hold a seminar-workshop on Developing and Enhancing Technical Skills on Cataloging and Indexing of print, non-print materials and E-resources on Aug. 25 to 27, at Hotel La Trinidad, Legaspi City. For inquiries/reservation please call Lynn 724-1994; Beth 932-1295; Juven 527-9672,527-3503.

Gantimpala's 'Kanser'

IT IS with great excitement that the Gantimpala Theater Foundation (GTF), in cooperation with Nestle Ice Cream and the National Parks Development Committee, present the opening of its 27th season with "Kanser" based on Jose Rizal's novel, "Noli Me Tangere", an enduring tale with a message that is as timely now as it was in Europe in 1886. Performances of Kanser are scheduled on Aug. 6, 7, and 8 (9 a.m., 12 noon, and 3 p.m. at the AFP Theater in Quezon City); Aug. 13, 14, 15 (10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Saint Cecilia's Hall, Saint Scholastica's College in Manila); Aug. 20 and 21 (10 a.m. and 2 p.m., at the RFC Cinema in Las Piñas City); and Aug. 27 and 28 (10 a.m. amd 2 p.m., at the Cabuyao Arts Center in Laguna).

'Easy English' seminar

CORBAN Daycare and Tutorial Center will hold an Easy English seminar starting on Aug. 8 and 15 from 2 to 5 p.m. The seminar will be held for 10 consecutive Sundays, totaling 30 hours. It will focus on English conversation, grammar, vocabulary building and pronunciation. Total cost is P3,500 inclusive of materials. Interested parties may call 842-6665, 809-3050 and 0917-6297718.

St. Philomena to be honored

ST. PHILOMENA, Virgin and Martyr, will be honored during her feast on Aug. 11 at the Santuario de Santa Philomena, the only one in the Philippines, at the Most Holy Redeemer Parish, Malac-Inaman Sts., Masambong, San Francisco Del Monte, Quezon City with Novena-Masses from Aug. 2 to 10 at 6 p.m. and a procession on Aug. 8 at 4 p.m. Theme for this year's celebration is: Saint Philomena, Victim of the Love of Christ. The Parish can be reached at 365-1011 and 412-3560. The relic of St. Philomena will be venerated after the Novena-Masses and on her feast day. Masses will be at 6 a.m., 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Aug. 11.

Ars Nova Choir holds 'Voces para Baseco'

ARS NOVA Spanish Choir will be having a series of special concert entitled "Voces para Baseco" for the benefit of the malnourished children. Their first show will start tonight, Aug. 5, at the St. Cecilia's Hall, St. Scholastica's College located at L. Guinto St., Manila. The renowned group from Spain is currently billeted at The Executive Plaza Hotel.

Productivity and purchasing seminars

MATSUSHITA Electric Phils Corp (Mepco), maker and distributor of Panasonic brand home appliances, in coordination with the Panasonic Regional Training Center-Singapore, will hold seminars on the following: Productivity Improvement Through Effective Factory Time Management on Aug. 25 to 27 ; and Fundamentals of Purchasing and Procurement on Aug. 26 to 27. Both seminars will be at at the HDC Bldg., Mepco, Taytay, Rizal. The Productivity course will focus on the effective use of time in relation to the earning power of the manufacturing enterprise whereas the Purchasing course will deal mainly on how to achieve cost effective operations through appropriate cost management. The programs are open to Mepco suppliers as well as other companies seeking to improve their manufacturing competitiveness. For inquiries, call Angelo Tamayo at 284-2293 or 635-2260 local 2821/2282 or email atamayo@mepco.panasonic.com.ph.

NHMFC urges borrowers on new plan

WITH the Aug. 9 deadline fast-approaching on the availability of its new affordable repayment plan for delinquent housing plan, the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp (NHMFC) has reminded its loan beneficiaries to beat the deadline and avoid losing their homes from eventual loan foreclosure. The loan restructuring scheme has highly-liberal terms tailor fit to make it truly affordable to economically-distressed housing beneficiaries. For particulars, applicants may call 893-1501.

PRA gears for 2004 Retailers confab

THE PHILIPPINE Retailers Association (PRA), the national organization of retailers in the country gears up for its 13th National Retailers Conference and Stores Asia Expo (13th NRCE) 2004 on Aug. 11 to 13 at the Isla Ballroom, Edsa Shangri-La Mandaluyong City. With the theme "In Search of Retailing Excellence", this year's NRCE will tackle retailing in today's hyper competitive environment, which has become more and more challenging with retailers besieged on all sides by conflict. Side by side with the conference is the only focused and dedicated retail suppliers exhibition billed as "Stores Asia Expo 2004". For more information, call the PRA executive secretariat at 687-4985/4180/4181 or email pra@nwave.net.

Araneta Center

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Cinema	Sound	Movie	Times
3	Dolby	GARFIELD	10:15 am 12:25 pm 2:35 pm 4:45 pm 6:55 pm 9:05 pm
4	SDDS	I, ROBOT	10:40 am 1:15 pm 3:50 pm
		ADV SCR COLLATERAL	6:55 pm 9:10 pm
5	dts	CATWOMAN	12:00 nn 2:15 pm 4:30 pm 6:45 pm 9:00 pm
6	Dolby	DEAD PEOPLE	11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm
7	Dolby	ETERNAL SUNSHINE	11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm

ARANETA COLISEUM

Date	Event
Aug 6	GARY V CONCERT
Aug 7	UAAP: La Salle vs. U E
Aug 8	UAAP: F E U vs. Ateneo
Aug 12	UAAP :2ND Round Games
Aug 13	NIGHT OF THE CHAMPIONS: THE REPEAT
Aug 14	UAAP :2ND Round Games
Aug 15	CCF WORSHIP SERVICE

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY : LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	MAKAMUNDO
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	MAKAMUNDO
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1, 2, & 3	GARFIELD / I ROBOT- COLLATERAL / CATWOMAN
PREMIERE THEATRE	IMELDA - COLLATERAL
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	GHOST HOUSE (RE-ISSUE)
CINEMA-2	PERLAS
CINEMA-3	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	PRINCE & ME
CINEMA-6	KILL BILL VOL. 2
CINEMA-7	WEREWOLF
CINEMA-8	LIBERATED 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-12	KING ARTHUR
CINEMA-14	ALONG CAME POLLY
CINEMA-15	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-1	LADY KILLERS
CINEMA-2	I ROBOT
CINEMA-4	RESERVED
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

For inquiries, call
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Cinema	Movie	Times	Rating
1	CATWOMAN	11:35, 2:10, 4:45 7:20, 10:05	GP
2	CATWOMAN	12:00, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45, 10:30	GP
3	GARFIELD	11:05, 1:15, 3:25 5:35, 7:45, 10:00	GP
4	I, ROBOT	11:45, 2:20, 4:55	PG-13
4	COLLATERAL (SNEAK PREVIEW)	7:20 10:00	R-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ELLA ENCHANTED **GP** 12:00,1:50,3:50,5:50,7:50,9:50	**CATWOMAN** **GP** 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	**GARFIELD** **GP** 12:00,2:00,4:00,6:00,8:00,10:00
ETERNAL SUNSHINE **R13** 11:50,1:50,3:55,6:00,8:10,10:20	**I, ROBOT** **PG13** 12:10,2:30,5:00,7:30,10:00	**IMELDA** **GP** 12:20,2:40,5:00 **COLLATERAL** **R13** 7:20 10:00

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Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

THE ALL-NEW VOLVO S40

THE NEW design cues make us say, "Yeah, baby, yeah!"

Stroking Taal's borders Scandinavian style

By Tessa R. Salazar

SPUNKY, young and sexy

AT HOME at the Seasons

THERE she is taking a peek again, stealing glances on the ridge highway whenever fogs momentarily dissipate. Timid, petite and mysterious Taal Volcano has been disturbed by the collective hum of Volvo cars traversing the curves of her borders. And like a gigantic white veil lifted by unseen hands, the fog enshrouding her disappears, and we are given once more a panoramic view of Taal—a visual appetizer for our intended destination in Tagaytay.

What could better match the arcane characteristics of Taal than the profundity of meditation-inducing Seasons at Ville Sommet? Amid the barrio atmosphere of Barangay Sikat is a menacing stone-walled gate isolating a 1,000-square-meter garden of lush greenery, orchids and rare shrubs. In it, a large greenhouse nestles herbs and vegetables, while a native-inspired open restaurant serves pasta dishes, green salads, garlic roasted potatoes, ice cream and fruit platter desserts.

A great view of an environmental wonder that is Taal matched by an equally hearty, healthy meal—that's what the people of Viking Cars Inc., exclusive distributor of Volvo in the Philippines, presented to us one overcast day last month.

The organizers couldn't have picked a more apt location to highlight Volvo cars' own sensitivities and sensibilities. For starters, the entry-level S40 sedan boasts of the cabin air filter system that protects its passengers from dust, exhaust particles and pollen.

The evolution of the S40s provides fearsome competition

Passenger convenience

The S40 takes passenger convenience to the extreme. Its interior components, such as the ignition key, center console and parking brake handle button, have been tested for contact allergies. Volvo meets the requirements of Oko-Tex—a standard that guarantees textile and leather are free from allergenic substances, health impairing materials and harmful emissions. It's perfect for allergy sufferers and asthmatics.

This day, we brought three of these S40s to romp around Tagaytay. Not to be misguided by the term "entry-level," the S40 still wears the full-fledged Scandinavian design, and boasts of Volvo innovations in safety and performance such as the (now this is a lungful) engine emission control technology that its makers say eliminates up to 98 percent of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides from the exhaust gases. The engine features a special catalytic coating on the radiator converting up to 75 percent of the harmful ground level ozone that passes through the radiator into pure oxygen. Whew!

Furthermore, environment-conscious Volvo makers say the S40 was built with 85 percent of its materials recyclable.

Now, can you see why the often reclusive Taal just had to take a look?

Design cues

The new S40 is, by all appearances, totally different from the S40 of old. The old S40 was conservative, generic and drab. Today's S40 looks very "Scandinavian" (a sleek cell phone comes to mind). This new design cue makes us say "Yeah, baby, yeah!"

Today's design, we can say, is unisex, spunky and young. Yuppies will find this car appealing, especially those in the age range of 25 to 35. But we can't say the over 40s will turn their back on this car.

STROKING/ C2

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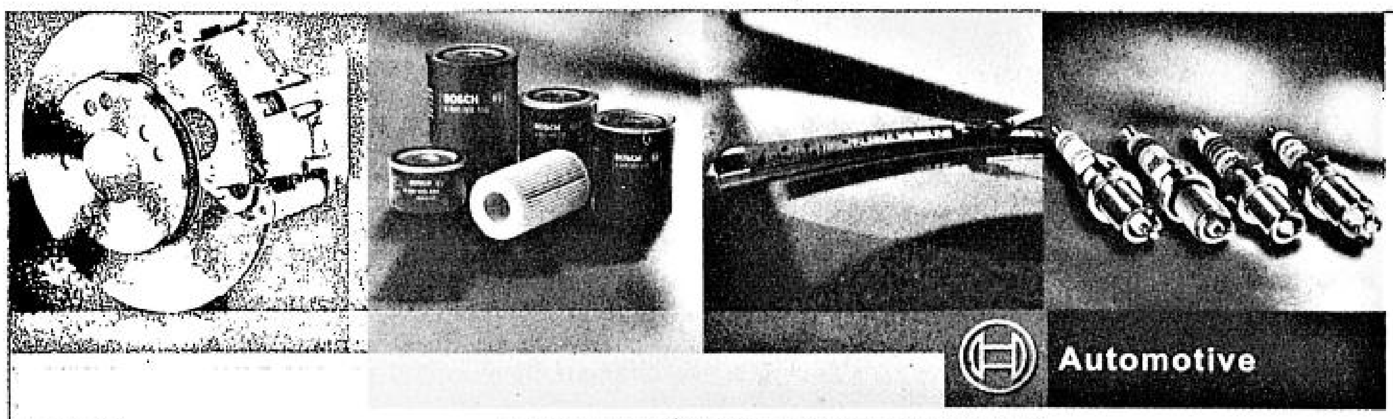

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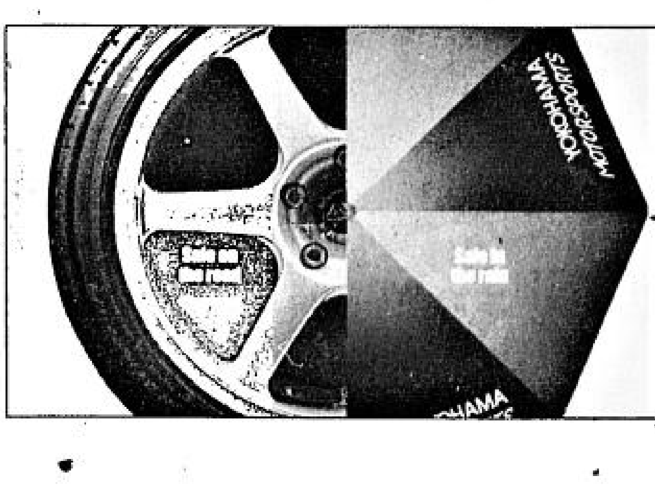

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Wonder of wonders

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

THERE is a new animal in the SUV category today that makes even the most discriminating vehicle enthusiast wonder about its extraordinary performance. The minute one drives this SUV, he/she will never be the same again insofar as his/her assessment of SUVs is concerned.

I refer to the X-Trail. This Nissan SUV is a wonder of all wonders. How Nissan was able to come up with such a brilliantly crafted vehicle is a mystery that needs to be unraveled. It is so good a drive you almost wouldn't want anymore even to try any other brand.

I keep telling Nissan's Vir Diwa and Raymond B. Tribdino: "Hey, guys, you did not only come up with an automotive marvel, you also hit a jackpot in the X-Trail!"

I was told that the X-Trail was the best-selling SUV last June. I only have praises for the buyers.

* * *

"People wanting a vehicle that can take on the harsh elements of the outdoors with a comfortable ride of an everyday sedan look forward to these mixed-platform vehicles," said Raymond. "The SUV is the most popular type of crossover vehicle. But finding the crossover formula proved to be very hard: either you get a vehicle that was too tame for the outdoors, or a vehicle that is too harsh a ride for everyday use."

The X-Trail gives solutions to that.

"The concept of a true crossover vehicle is getting more popular in the global automobile market than ever before," said Raymond. "And while the mix between car and off-roader becomes increasingly blurred, some vehicles are recklessly labeled as SUVs, even when they are simply cars with a taller stance."

As has been bandied about, the Nissan X-Trail is known as the "authentic" SUV, because though much of the technology is shared with the Nissan Skyline GT, it was designed from ground up to work on both the "extreme outdoors and in civilized conditions."

"The X-Trail is a real crossover vehicle, it is versatile as a comfortable everyday vehicle for urban use, and a real off-roader. So it is the most logical choice for people who want to explore the outdoors, sometimes to the extreme," said Flora L. Pitogo, NMPI product specialist.

* * *

"Although the X-Trail is always perfect for trips off the road, it is also one of the most comfortable and pliant rides of its kind in the market," said Vir Diwa, a long-time Nissan hotshot, who plays mean golf.

"For example," said Vir, "the X-Trail's specially designed foot-rest is inspired by airline seat styling, providing lots of legroom for the rear passengers."

"One of the reasons the X-Trail sells very well is its luxurious car-like ride. This type of ride is actually least expected in a versatile 4x4 like the X-Trail. So the X-Trail also fits the needs of motorists who drive more often on urban roads than outdoors," Ms Pitogo said.

Because the X-Trail is equipped with a revolutionary four-wheel drive system borrowed from the fast and nimble Skyline GT, and is considered among the most advanced in the world, the SUV can produce stunning on-road acceleration and mind-boggling off-road performance.

"The X-Trail does not need to detect wheel spin at start-up because all four wheels spin first, providing good grip and plenty of traction," said Masahiro Toi, X-Trail's chief product planner.

Even the film ads for X-Trail were "real as reel."

"For one thing, no camera tricks were employed when the off-road X-Trail TV ads were filmed. I wonder if the same thing can be done with the other SUVs or crossover vehicles," Ms Pitogo said.

* * *

With the rains starting to pour in, makers of the X-Trail are more than ready to subject their vehicle to extreme tests in the floods. They said that X-Trail's rivals will be no match against the power of the X-Trail to lick rising floodwaters.

"The rainy season will just be a piece of cake, because it is primarily designed to take the most challenging road conditions, including flooded streets and rutted roads," said Raymond. "It can clear up to 18 inches of water without a hitch due to the good ride height and good location of its air intake, which is just below the hood line. We are quite confident that the Nissan X-Trail can easily survive the floods and the rainy season without a hitch."

"All-Mode 4x4 is so important in water crossings," said Masahiro Toi. "The engine delivers great amounts of torque to the wheels which if not used properly will only lead to wheel spin. The X-Trail does not need to detect wheel spin at start-up because all four wheels spin first, providing good grip and plenty of traction."

The locally manufactured X-Trail was also recently cited for its high assembly quality. Its Vehicle Evaluation Survey (VES) is the highest in the region—even better than in Japan.

"If truth be told, most SUV buyers know little about the X-Trail's attributes—its drive-train and high-build quality, and its innate ability to swim in knee-deep water," Raymond said.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE. According to my good friend Emily Arroyo-Lim, UCM, reputedly one of Malaysia's top car aircon specialists, has put up a local subsidiary through Jarcom Enterprises. It has dealers in Metro Manila, Dagupan, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu and Davao.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Safe driving is avoiding the temptation of overtaking in a curve even when it seems clear there is vehicle coming from the opposite direction.

NISSAN X-Trail

Mitsubishi donates engines to DLSU

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines recently signed an agreement with De La Salle University-Dasmariñas to provide assistance in restructuring the school's Automotive Technology curriculum. MMPC president and CEO Kengo Takase said: "We are very pleased to have shared our resources and knowledge with a very good and reputable university."

With this program, DLSU-D's College of Engineering and Technology would be able to grant scholarships for automotive technology training to the economically challenged youth. Takase also added that MMPC and its subsidiaries would be considering employing the graduates of this two-year Certificate of Program in Automotive Technology.

Part of the assistance package was the donation of a 1.5-liter 4G15 and the 2.5-liter 4D56 engine and transmission assemblies for hands-on training. Several Mitsubishi Service Technicians Educational Programs or MSTEPs will also be offered to De LaSalle instructors free of charge to refresh their knowledge on present automotive technologies. Training materials such as textbooks would also be provided by Mitsubishi Motors Philippines.

Nissan introduces new Cefiro 300EX

New 2005 Nissan Cefiro 300EX

NISSAN Motor Philippines Inc. president Leman Lee hands over the ceremonial key of the Nissan Cefiro 300EX to the Mantrade Development Corp. sales professional representing lawyer Polo Pantaleon.

NISSAN Motor Philippines Inc. president Leman Lee handed over the ceremonial key of the Nissan Cefiro 300EX to the Mantrade Development Corp. sales professional representing lawyer Polo Pantaleon, who bought one of the first Cefiro 300EX prior to the formal launch of NMPI's latest luxury car.

The turnover of the ceremonial key was held during the simultaneous dealer launch of the Cefiro 300EX that was held on July 16 and was attended by top NMPI officials and Nissan dealer officers, car owners and prospects.

During the dealer launch, many guests and VIPs were impressed by the powerful V6 engine of the Cefiro 300EX which produces 220PS at 6,400 rpm, as well as features adjustment for the driver seat, rear power sunshade, 2-DIN audio system with in dash CD and cassette player with 12-disc CD shuttle, and the 16-inch rims.

The Nissan Cefiro 300EX is big brother to two other equally luxurious sedans—the 2.0L Classic and Superior. The Cefiro 300EX retails for P1.45 million while the 2.0L Superior and Classic sells for P1.290 million and P1.19 million, respectively.

Experience driving pleasure with Bajaj motorcycles

BAJAJ Auto Ltd. of India, through Kawasaki Motors (Phils.) launches exciting models for the Philippine market, among which are the newly released Bajaj BYK 100, Caliber 115 and Wind 125. Bajaj models will surely make a difference in the lives of Filipino motorcycle enthusiasts on the go. With their optimum performance and state of the art features, Bajaj models are all set to compete with local motorcycles.

Kawasaki Motors (Phils.) is always geared toward improving its products with constant enhancements. Partnership between KMP and Bajaj Auto Ltd. has been highly commended for its dedication, commitment and offering nothing but the best that lives up to the customers' fast-changing lifestyle.

These motorcycles reflect the pioneering spirit and outstanding leadership of Rahul Bajaj of Bajaj Auto Ltd. in India. BAL is a highly reputed business house and is well known for its corporate governance. Its sound management practices and financial standing have enabled the firm to be rankes among the top 10 corporations in India.

**2004 KAWASAKI
Bajaj BYK 100**

Stroking Taal's borders Scandinavian style

From page C1

The S40 is also different in form from the S60, which embodies a masculine look in a coupé style. The S60 corporate profile is "made," while the S40 conjures images of a creative artist already making ripples in the art scene. The S40 uses technology at will, like the free-floating center console panel and a plasma monitor a couple of centimeters thick, just like the plasma screens we see in appliance dealerships. It's like having an Egyptian scroll laid out before you 3,000 years after the pyramids were built.

The new S40 has a shorter overhang now, so the driver is located nearer up front. The impression we get right away is agility. It's now a lot easier to drive and maneuver the S40. Complementing the agility is the stability accorded by the position of tires with respect to the bumpers. The two are nearer to each other, so it becomes easier to park, for one. The S40 has a turning radius of 10.6 meters.

The new S40 is lighter compared to the new one. The new S40 is pulled by 170 horses—30 less than the old S40 T4 (turbo)-though the new one carries a bigger engine with 2.4 liters, five-cylinder double overhead cam. The engine of the new S40, compared to the S60, was made narrower and shorter to fit the compactness of the sedan.

So the new S40 may have untied some horses to graze and roam free in Tagaytay, but it has lost weight, too, effectively keeping the car, more or less, as powerful as the old one. Step on the gas, and feel the responsiveness. Now imagine what a turbo version of this can do to your adrenal glands.

But I have an affinity for sunroofs and moon roofs, so one downside here is I just miss the old S40's moon roof.

I also got the chance to drive the S60 T5 (turbo) from Manila before trying out the S40. At first, I felt that the S40 was bulkier than the S60, and I found out later that the S40's lack of turbo gave this illusion. But when push came to shove (especially when you're shoving speeds with INQUIRER columnist Aida Sevilla-Mendoza, a legend of a speed freak even among grizzled motoring journalists), the S40 generated almost the same torque with the turbo S60.

So, even with just 170 horses, which is 10 hp less than the S60, the torque difference is maintained at 10 ft/lb difference (S40 is 230 Nm and the S60 has 240 Nm). Not bad for a naturally aspirated engine.

The ride may be firm and could be felt on the bumps and grinds of our country's imperfect highways, but the firmness, I think, is perfect for attacking corners, which many S40 owners, I presume, would be tempted to do.

Longer wheelbase

And because the wheels are positioned closer to the bumpers, the S40 has a longer wheelbase than the old one, despite it being shorter in body. As expected, Volvo has improved on nearly everything about the S40. Even the interior volume has increased, and rivals the S60 in terms of roominess.

You'll also be surprised with the boot. It's bigger than the boot of BMW 3 series. For a compact car, this is quite an achievement.

Even the magwheel holes for screws are different. The old S40 used to have four holes. Now it has five.

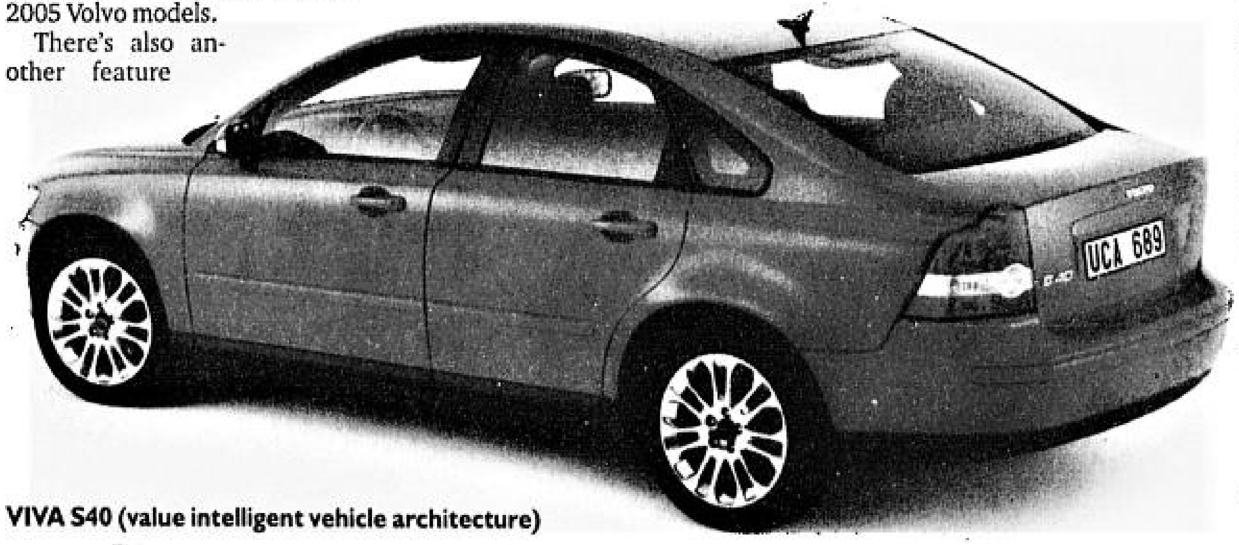
Safety seats, chassis

Of course, Volvo evolves its own standards of safety here. The new S40 has reinforced backrest seat. When back passengers don't wear their belts and when luggage hits the backrest in case of an accident, the passengers will withstand the force of impact. Eventually, this feature will be present in all 2005 Volvo models.

There's also another feature for the two-pronged chassis in front.

Volvo's technical expert Froilan Valencia explains that Volvo's entire front prong is utilized for safety. The new S40 has a chassis with four stages of impact. The deformation zone in front can be detached and changed with a new one. You get the strength and stiffness of the new chassis to protect you again. You can't get the same thing with tinsmith repair, which many automakers resort to, Froilan stresses. This is so very Volvo, indeed.

The evolution of the Volvo sedan, as seen in the new S40, provides fearsome competition for both BMW 3 series sedans and the Audi A4. For now the S40 at P1.8 million is content to peaceably graze in the foothills and ridges of Tagaytay. But when the time comes for its kind to stampede down the mountains, even the temperamental Taal can do nothing but hide in the fog.



VIVA S40 (value intelligent vehicle architecture)

Rediscovering the Lancer

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

THERE was a time when the Mitsubishi Lancer was a top-ranking competitor for pole position in the hotly contested compact car market. Because Ralliart-modified Lancers derived from the spectacular Lancer Evolution have triumphed in the World Rally Championship (WRC), Mitsubishi's entry-level passenger sedan was a favorite among young adults who fancy high performance in cars.

These days, however, the Lancer is trying to regain lost ground as its beleaguered parent company, Misubishi Motors, struggles with financial and credibility problems after a series of defect cover-up scandals and bad loans in Japan and North America, respectively. Despite its woes, Mitsubishi has fielded a substantially redesigned Lancer for 2004 with a new grille, engine hood, halogen headlamps, trunk lid, bumpers and rear combination taillights similar to the Evo's.

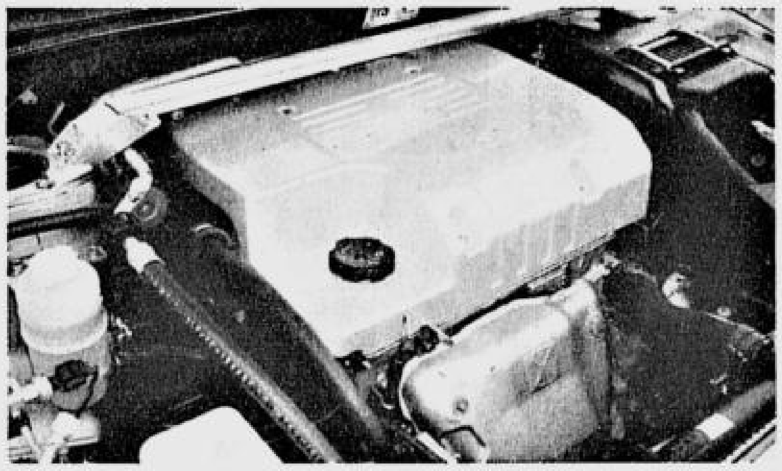
In North America, the basic Lancer is powered by a 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine and a 2.4-liter, 162 bhp Ralliart sport variant is also available. In Singapore and other Asean countries, a turbocharged 1.8-liter, 165-bhp Lancer Ralliart is being sold. Unfortunately, none of these sport compacts is in the market here.

CVT with Sportronic

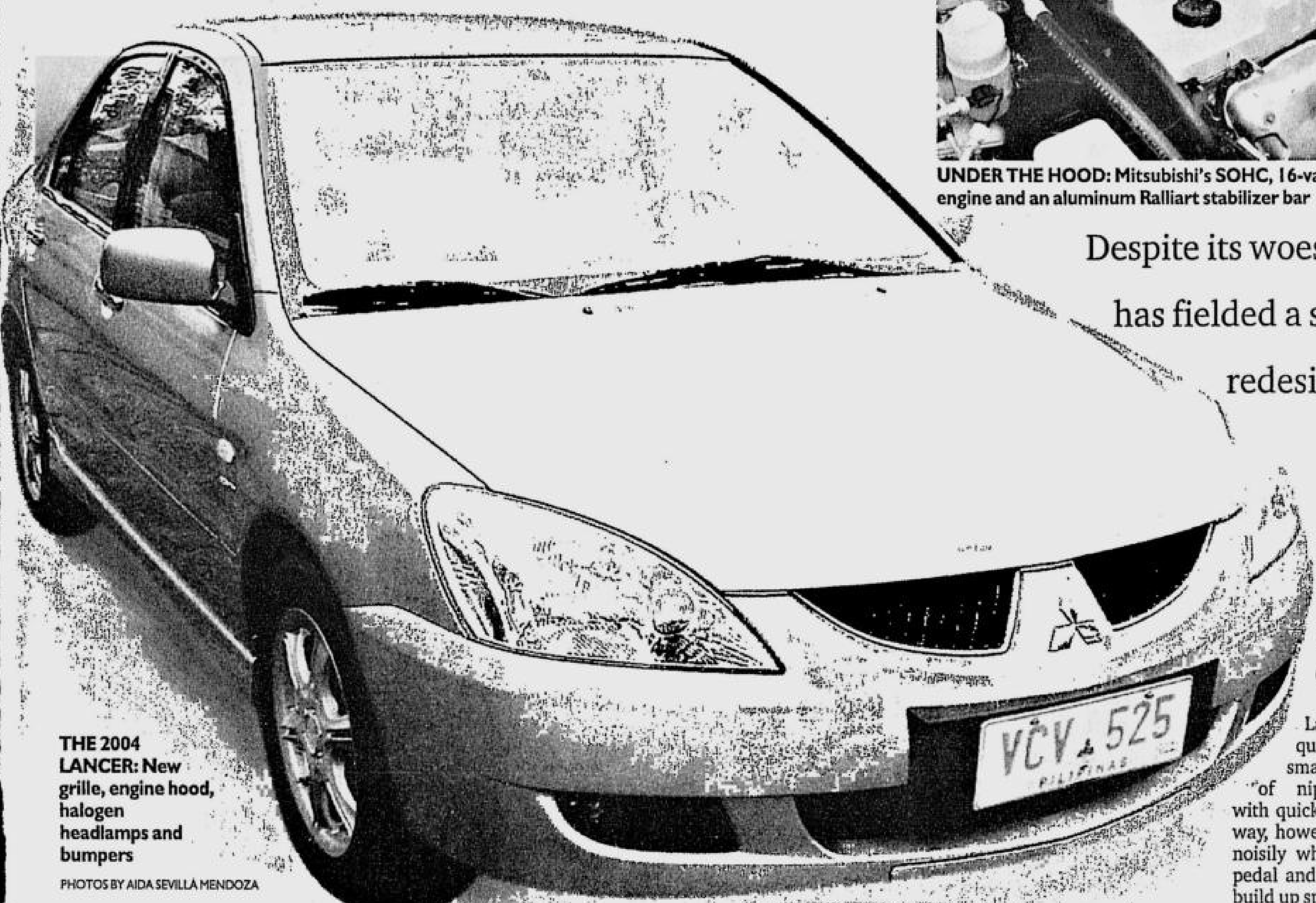
At present, the Lancer MX, GLS and GLX sold by Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. as CBUs (completely built units) from Thailand are equipped with the SOHC, 16-valve 1.6-liter 4G18 cyclone engine that delivers 110 PS/6,200 rpm peak horsepower and 14.1 kg-m/4,200 rpm max torque. Those engine specs are prosaic compared to other 1.6-liter brands, you might say, but the Invecs-III Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) with 6-speed Sportronic in the MX (P838,000) and GLS (P758,000) variants does give the Lancer some bragging rights.

Mitsubishi, after all, offered CVT in its mass production cars before Honda did in the latest iteration of its City. Described briefly, Mitsubishi's CVT is belt-driven shift linkage borrowed from the Lancer Evo that allows for infinite "continuously variable" gear ratios which, in turn, enable the engine to perform more efficiently. The Sportronic feature gives the driver the option to upshift and downshift through six manual speeds without a clutch, thereby enjoying "the sportiness of a manual transmission with the convenience of an automatic."

A PLUSH two-tone interior with beige leather, woodgrain paneling and bluish-gray atop the dash and door trims



UNDER THE HOOD: Mitsubishi's SOHC, 16-valve, 1.6-liter cyclone engine and an aluminum Ralliart stabilizer bar



THE 2004 LANCER: New grille, engine hood, halogen headlamps and bumpers

PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA MENDOZA

Despite its woes, Mitsubishi has fielded a substantially redesigned Lancer for 2004

Quick reflexes

In urban traffic, the Lancer's power is adequate as it accelerates smartly, darting in and out of nip-and-tuck situations with quick reflexes. On the freeway, however, the engine booms noisily when you floor the gas pedal and it takes some time to build up speed, even if you switch to Sportronic. On the other hand, once the Lancer reaches 100 km/hr, the engine noise diminishes and the car surges forward to 150 km/hr with ease, all the while maintaining impressive highway speed stability. The Lancer's firm damping and nimble handling can be traced to its independent multilink rear suspension plus stabilizer bars front and rear. Disc brakes on all four 15-inch wheels supplemented by ABS, EBD and dual diaphragm brake boosters deliver adequate stopping power when needed.

On the highway as well as in town, the Lancer's ride quality is superb despite the occasional engine noise intrusion. In the MX, the driver and passengers are comfortably ensconced in well-upholstered, beige leather seats with armrests front and rear. Leg room, hip room and head room are ample for everyone, including in the rear when there are only two passengers. The driver and passengers are provided an excellent field of vision by the low instrument panel, low waistline and high roof.

Elegant interior

The Lancer has an elegant two-tone cabin, with blue-gray on top of the dashboard and door trims setting off the beige mid to lower portion. Woodgrain paneling on the dash and gear box further accentuate the tasteful color combination. Chrome scuff plates, an overhead compartment, map lamps, four cupholders and a six-speaker Pioneer stereo system with tuner, single in-dash CD and MP3 player complete the MX's interior picture.

The Lancer's safety equipment, aside from front SRS airbags (dual in the MX, driver side for the GLS and GLX) and ABS with EBD (standard in the MX, optional in the other variants), 4-wheel disc brakes and front and rear stabilizer bars, include keyless entry with antitheft alarm system, back-up sensors and whiplash-minimizing front headrests.

Summing up, the 1.6-liter 2004 Lancer meets everyday motoring needs adequately and comfortably with a hint of the Evo in its roadholding agility. But can car enthusiasts be blamed if they long for the 2.4- liter Lancer Ralliart?

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Going the speed of light is bad for your age.

2004 Henry Ford Awards launched

THE SEARCH for the country's best automotive journalists continues with the launch of the 2004 Henry Ford Awards.

Since it was introduced in the Philippines in 2001, the contest has consistently drawn out exceptional work from the country's print, broadcast and online automotive journalists.

The competition follows through on Ford's objective of recognizing and nurturing the best journalist talents the country has to offer. To date, 25 automotive news features and photos have been recognized.

Ford is making the 2004 Henry Ford Awards bigger and more exciting with the introduction of two new categories: the Auto Test Drive and the Motoring Column Issue. The Auto Test Drive category for print and online journalists welcomes entries that present a thorough review of a vehicle via a test-drive activity, and presents any innovation in the vehicle, not exclusive to Ford.

Meanwhile, the Motoring Column Issue welcomes entries that present the author's opinion and views on a vehicle, auto event and the auto industry, not exclusive to Ford.

There are nine categories in this year's program. The other categories are Published Photo for Newspaper, Published Photo for Magazine, Auto Event Story, Auto Industry Story, Online Feature, Automotive Television Feature and Best Ford Feature Story.

Except for the last category, all articles and television features are not limited to coverage of Ford. Entries may be nominated by fellow journalists, editors, publishers and TV producers or entered by the participating journalists themselves.

Petron introduces fleet card for special clientele

PETRON Corp. recently launched an innovative card custom-made for the requirements of its special clientele.

The Petron Fleet Card opens the door to a world of worry-free fleet management. It promises to relieve companies and entrepreneurs from the tedious task of operating and monitoring a number of vehicles, which are an integral part of their businesses.

First in RP

The microchip-based fleet card, the first of its kind in the country, works like a credit card that you can use when you gas up or purchase products and avail of services from Petron stations.

Unlike other fleet cards, though, you don't have to experience offline worries with the Petron Fleet Card as it is backed up by the microchip technology that allows you to transact business anytime, making it the more reliable and dependable solution to fleet management.

3 card types

What's even better is that it comes with a greater variety of usage options to streamline fleet operations. Its flexibility allows for the creation of three card types customized to fit specific requirements.

There's the Operator Card, the use of which is linked to the driver regardless of the vehicle used. This is best suited for companies that provide gasoline allowance to their employees. This particular Petron Fleet Card shows the card number, the cardholder's name and the company name.

FROM LEFT are Preton president and CEO Khalid Al-Faddagh, Pops Fernandez and Petron chair Nick Alcantara

Another option is the Vehicle Card which is specific to one vehicle, regardless of the driver. It is used to make sure that fuel purchases are loaded only to authorized vehicles. Embossed on the card are the card number, the company name, and the vehicle plate and description. As an added feature, a four-digit driver code will be issued to other authorized drivers to identify which driver is using the authorized vehicle at any given time.

Finally, there's the Operator-Vehicle Card. This card can only be used by the cardholder himself using the vehicle specified on the card. Appropriate for customers who assign a specific vehicle to a specific individual. On the face of the card appears the card number, cardholder's name, the company name, and the vehicle plate and description.

The Petron Fleet Card's flexibility extends to setting specific limits that you yourself can dictate to have better control of your fleet's expenses. This translates to bigger savings for you.

Other benefits

The Petron Fleet Card comes with free 24-hour towing and roadside assistance from Petron's service provider. It's like having a whole service team behind your fleet anywhere you go.

Furthermore, purchases made through the Petron Fleet Card automatically earn points that can be exchanged for items through the Loyalty Incentive Program. You will also be entitled to product rebates and a 10 percent discount on automotive services.

Even paying your bills is a breeze. You can make payments over-the-counter through Petron's partner-bank's branch network. Accounts are computed based on an average 30-day interest free credit that will help you easily manage your expenses. As an added convenience, purchases on all your fleet cards are charged to one central account for easy monitoring.

For more information on the Petron Fleet Card, call 886-3175 for Metro Manila or the PLDT toll-free number 1-800-10-Petron1 (1-800-10-7387661) or Digital toll-free number 1-800-31-Petron (1-800-31-738766) for outside Metro Manila.

Bank offers new Nissan Sentra in raffle promo

EAST West Bank recently launched the "Car and Cash Frenzy" promo to generate new deposits and entice existing clients to increase their deposits.

East West Bank partnered with Nissan, McDonald's, Smart and Abenson Inc. to deliver a unique concept in promoting the bank.

The bank's promo is open to new and existing depositors of savings or current accounts.

Depositors are entitled to a P100 cash voucher for every P30,000 minimum initial deposit balance. The cash voucher can be redeemed for Smart Buddy Prepaid airtime load worth P115 at any Smart Wireless Center nationwide, or used for purchase at any Abenson Inc. outlet.

In addition, the client may also opt to credit the voucher amount to his newly opened savings or current account, or use it to pay bills over the counter at any East West Bank Personalized Banking Center. In lieu of the cash voucher, the depositor may also opt to get a P100 McDonald's gift certificate that can be redeemed at any McDonald's outlet.

Apart from the cash voucher, the depositor automatically qualifies for the raffle where a brand-new Nissan Sentra 1.3 GX M/T will be given away as the grand prize. Also at stake are digital camera, desktop computers, TV with DVD and other major home appliances from Abenson.

Five sets of Smart Buddy Nokia 6610i phonekits also await the lucky winners. This East West Bank promo runs from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2004.

NISSAN Sentra 1.3 GX M/T

EXTENDED

until August 31, 2004

Double the prizes.

Double your chances of winning!

GRAND RAFFLE DRAW IS ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2004

- Promo is valid for participating Toyota Vehicle purchases until August 31, 2004
- Avail of FREE parts and services up to 10,000 kms for the REVO and RAV4 4x4 through Toyota Financial Services [illegible]
- Purchases through Toyota Financial Services have more chances of winning

* As approved by DTI-NCR.

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- The REVO (all variants) and RAV4 (4x4) can be purchased through attractive financing schemes through Toyota Financial Services.
- ***Downpayment for as low as ₱100,000 for all variants.***
- Low monthly payments for the REVO DLX Gas at P7,291 at 50% downpayment at 60 months.
- Low monthly payments for the RAV4 4x4 A/T at P14,352 at 50% downpayment at 60 months.
- Buyers who participate in this financing promotion will also have a chance to participate in the raffle promotion.

REVO

VARIANT	SRP	LOW DP	12	18	24	36	48	60
REVO VX 2.0 GAS A/T	939,000	100,000	72,751	50,109	39,811	28,541	23,287	19,972
SR 1.8 GAS A/T	896,000	100,000	68,862	47,430	37,684	27,016	22,043	18,905
GSX 2.0 GAS A/T	847,000	100,000	64,430	44,378	35,261	25,279	20,626	17,688
GLX 1.8 GAS A/T	807,000	100,000	60,812	41,886	33,283	23,861	19,469	16,695
GL GAS	698,000	100,000	50,953	35,095	27,893	19,997	16,316	13,988
DLX GAS (15.08%dp)	663,000	100,000	47,788	32,915	26,162	18,756	15,303	13,119
DLX GAS (50%dp)	663,000	331,500	27,625	18,465	14,684	10,518	8,575	7,291
DLX DSL	690,000	100,000	50,230	34,597	27,497	19,713	16,084	13,789

RAV 4

VARIANT	SRP	DP	12	18	24	36	48	60
RAV4 4x4 (8.08%DP)	1,238,000	100,000	99,795	68,736	54,597	39,141	31,936	27,218
RAV4 4x4 (50%dp)	1,238,000	619,000	52,797	36,348	28,874	20,682	16,862	14,352

HERE'S HOW TO JOIN THE RAFFLE:

- For every purchase of any Toyota vehicle*, buyers would get the corresponding number of raffle coupons depending on the model purchased.
- Buyers should fill up the coupon with his/her name, address, age, telephone number, mobile number, model purchased, Sales Invoice Number, dealer outlet and affix their signature.
- Buyers may drop their coupons at the Toyota Dealer where they purchased the vehicle.
- Grand Raffle Draw is on September 6, 2004 at the Toyota Motor Philippines' Head Office at 31/F, GT Tower, Ayala Avenue corner Salcedo Sts., Makati City.
- See posters for details.

** Except Corolla XL and Hilux DLX variants.*

Actual color may vary. Per DTI-NCR Permit No.3492 Series of 2004.

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COOKING with a prayer/D2

LIFESTYLE

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

In praise of the humble American burger

WALTER Scheib (first row, R), menu-master for the US president and current Club de Chefs des Chefs (CCC) chair, with fellow chefs to world leaders during the Chefs' Summit at the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC

AFP PHOTO

At a summit of chefs to world leaders, the White House chef's gourmet treatment of a much derided junk food gets good reviews

WASHINGTON—The humble hamburger, a symbolic staple of American cuisine, took a gourmet ride last week as President George W. Bush's chef treated counterparts from around the globe to his take on the sizzling classic.

At a "Chefs of World Leaders Summit," White House chef Walter Scheib turned up the heat, and colleagues flipped for his non-fast-food favorite.

"The beef was very well cooked, the roll fresh and warm," recalled a satisfied Michel de Matteis, a Frenchman in charge of official receptions in Mauritius.

"I quite liked it. I don't eat a lot of hamburgers, but the texture was pleasant," said Gilles Poyac, chef for the speaker of the French Senate, who was standing in at the "Club de chefs des chefs" gathering in the absence of the head of French President Jacques Chirac's kitchen.

Quality ingredients

Top-quality ingredients were selected for the hamburgers, a food some have derided as the epitome of junk food.

"Small 'pain au lait' buns, cherry tomatoes, Tomme de Savoie cheese, American Black Angus beef, pancetta," recalled Patrick Dahms, a chef at the luxury Willard Hotel in Washington, where the event was held.

Chirac praised American cuisine during the Group of Eight summit held in Sea Island, Georgia in June. His host, Bush, noted how Chirac had particularly enjoyed a cheeseburger at that gathering.

The "Club de chefs des chefs," since 1977, has brought together the culinary experts who prepare meals for presidents, prime ministers and royalty. They meet each year in a different country to swap recipes and talk trends.

Top favorites

On Monday, they served up a sampling of the favorite dishes of current world leaders.

M.S. Gupta, the chef in charge of official receptions in India, prepared a chicken tikka. Joshua Drache, chef to the Canadian prime minister, served up a caribou filet with risotto, while Poyac offered pigeon with foie gras.

Scheib, an American who has been president of the club for three years, said US cuisine has evolved a great deal in the past 20 years.

"Now we have American chefs who have learned to respect the product, who have learned to respect the season, have learned to really love and appreciate the food," he said.

And the tastes of the American public have also changed over the past 20 years, he added.

Noting the wide range of ingredients that immigrant cultures have brought to the United States, Scheib said, "Now people really love the idea of experimenting."

"American food is like American culture. People (are) from all over the world. There is no one American cuisine. It is all like jazz," he said.

"I don't think that any serious cook or any serious chef can ever say that they are not influenced by French cooking," he added, noting, "it's the root of all European cooking, and most of the great American chefs have trained in France or been trained by people who have trained in France."

On the ideas sampled here, Scheib said, "these recipes are not necessarily haute cuisine; rather, they provide a view of homestyle cooking from the first families of the world."

"We obviously want to make sure they will make the first family happy. We really try to show them the best we can," Scheib added.

AFP

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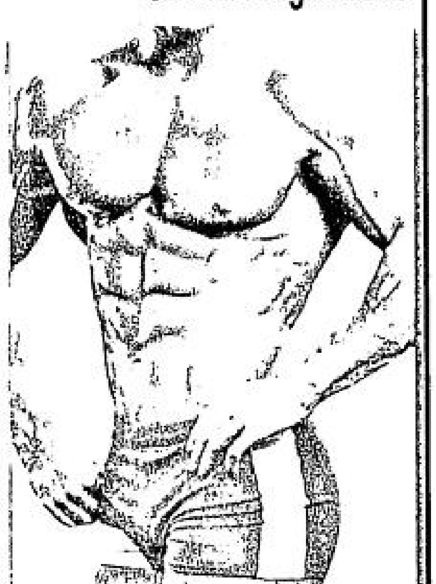

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ERNEST REYNOSO GALA
Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied at Chopstick and Hongkong Town Gas Culinary Schools

Leni Reynoso-Araullo
CERTIFIED WILTON METHOD SCHOOL INSTRUCTOR, Chicago, U.S.A.
Masters in Cake Decorating, Wilton School, Chicago, U.S.A., 1974 under Martha & Stanley Wilton
Graduate : Chicago School of Cooking and Catering
Graduate : Full Course, Thai Cooking School at the Oriental Hotel, Bangkok
Studied cooking in Europe, South America & Hongkong
Co-founder, Reynoso Cooking and Baking School, March, 1963

LEARN AND EARN! PRACTICAL, EASY, EXACT RECIPES

AUG 6 FRI 2:30 - 5:30PM - RESTAURANT RECIPES III. SPICY BUFFALO WINGS W/ GARLIC DIP LINGUINNE W/ CRAB FAT TOPPED W/ ROASTED BELL PEPPERS, MONTEREY ROAST BEEF SLICES W/ MOZARELLA CHEESE-TOMATO-BASIL SERVED W/ FRENCH BAKER'S CIABATTA BREAD, CAMBELL'S DELICIOUS SHEPERD'S PIE, CRABSTICKS & FRIES W/ TERIYAKI SAUCE, MONTEREY PORK TENDERLOIN STICKS W/ HOT CHILI SATE SAUCE P980. DELICIOUS RECIPES MADE EASY

AUG 7 SAT 2:30 - 5:30PM - MAX'S STYLE FRIED CHICKEN. JOLLIBEE STYLE CHICKEN W/ GRAVY CHICKEN BURGER DELICIOUS POTATO SALAD SIZZLING GRILLED PORK CHOPS, FOUR SEASONS PUNCH RIPE MANGO JUICE MELON TAPIOCA W/ SAGO GREEN MANGO JUICE P980.

AUG 9 MON 2:30 - 5:30PM - LEARN THE TECHNIQUES TO COOKING THE JUICIEST MONTEREY PORTERHOUSE STEAKS; BEEF TENDERLOIN STEAK ALA POBRE, DELICIOUS HOMEMADE GRAVY, CAESAR'S SALAD, ROAST ORANGE PORK LOIN, BEST SELLING BAKED SPAGHETTI W/ 2 SAUCES, MAKE YOUR OWN CREPES SAMURAI P980.

AUG 10 TUE 2:30 - 6:00PM - 9 SPECIAL BARBECUE; BEEF TERIYAKI IN SKEWERS; PORK SPARERIBS W/ HOISIN SAUCE - MAGNOLIA CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS IN HONEY SAUCE, (SATE A JAM) CHICKEN SKEWERS IN PEANUT SAUCE, BEEF RIBS W/ PEKING NOODLES, DELICIOUS PORK SPARERIBS, NEW KOREAN BEEF BARBECUE NASI GORING (INDONESIAN FRIED RICE), FERNANDO MIGUEL ERENETA CHICKEN HONEY, THE BEST PORK BARBECUE W/ SPECIAL PEANUT SAUCE P980.

AUG 11 WED 2:30 - 5:30PM - DELICIOUS CHICKEN CORDON BLEU W/ CREAMY SAUCE; PAELLA NEGRA - SPICY SQUID RINGS IN GARLIC SAUCE, DEBONED LEMONY SOY CHICKEN ON WILD RICE ORIENTAL SPRING ROLLS W/ SWEET CHILI SAUCE, EASY TIRAMISU P980.

AUG 12 THU 2:30 - 5:30PM - DELICIOUS RESTAURANT SPECIALTIES YOU WILL LOVE TO DO AT HOME! GARLIC ROASTED MAGNOLIA CHICKEN W/ PEPPER STEAK SUCE, MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN CUBES SALPICADO FETTUCINE W/ 3 DIFFERENT SAUCES - PESTO (GARLIC BASIL), BLACK SUID INK, CREAMY MAYO CHEESE HIGHLANDS SALAD W/ OLIVES & BLUE CHEESE DRESSINGS, HOT CARAMEL BANANA FUDGE BROWNIE PIE W/ CREAM PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF CENTURY TUNA BURGERS, BEEF BURGERS W/ DIFFERENT DRESSINGS P980.

AUG 13 FRI 2:30 - 6:00PM LIGHT & AIRY ENSAYMADAS; CHEESEROLLS, SPECIAL EGG PANDESAL, PANDESAL W/ FILLING, CINNAMON ROLLS BREAD BAKING MADE EASY! P980.

AUG 14 SAT 2:30 - 6:00PM POPULAR JAPANESE DISHES II. LEARN 8 DELICIOUS RECIPES! SHABU-SHABU W/ 2 SAUCES, ASSORTED CRISPY TEMPURA; GRILLED PORK & BEEF SLICE, UDON (VERY SPECIAL NOODLES), FRIED TOFUS IN SPECIAL SAUCE, BREADED CHICKEN WINGS W/ VINEGAR SAUCE, JAPANESE MIXED FRIED RICE PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF COMPLETE SUSHI BAR P980.

AUG 15 SUN 2:30 - 6:00PM - BUSINESS BAKESHOP BESTSELLERS! MACAPUNO PANDAN CAKE W/ MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER CREAM FROSTING; BRAZO DE MERCEDES, FROZEN UP TO 6 MONTHS SYLVANAS CLASSIC CHOCOLATE MOUSSE CAKE. P980. BY MORELLA.

AUG 16 MON 2:30 - 6:15PM - LEARN VERY FLAKY PUFF PASTRY & CROISSANTS & ASSORTED DANISH PASTRIES THE EASY WAY (W/ DIFFERENT FILLINGS) P1,200. BY MORELLA.

AUG 17 TUE 2:30 - 6:00PM - CHEF LORIE REYNOSO'S BAKED NEW YORK CHEESECAKE; LAVA CAKE, DOME CAKE (CHOCOLATE-COVERED ICE CREAM CAKE W/ CHOCOLATE CAKE BASE), CREAM PUFFS W/ BAVARIAN & CHOCO FILLING P1,200. BY MORELLA

AUG 18 WED 2:30 - 6:00PM - UBE CHIFFON CAKE, ROCKY ROAD. MOIST CHOCOLATE CAKE, FOOD FOR THE GODS & WALNUT BROWNIES. PLUS TIPS ON CONVERTING CAKES INTO JELLY ROLLS & MUFFINS. DELICIOUS CAKES SOLD IN TOP BAKESHOPS! ALL CAKES W/ DIFFERENT ICINGS! P980. BY MORELLA

AUG 19 THU 2:30 - 6:00PM - BEST SELLER OVEN BAKED CHICKEN PIES IN MUFFIN CUPS; FLAKY EMPANADA MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH MAMON MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER SLICES PUTO PAO PUTO UBE TRI-COLORED & FLAVORED PUTO BONUS RECIPE - MACAROONS P980. BY MORELLA

AUG 20 FRI 2:30 - 6:00PM - 8 MONEY-MAKING PIES & CAKES BY MORELLA. NO BAKE GRAHAM LAYERED MANGO ICE BOX CREAM CHEESECAKE LIGHT BANANA LOAF CRUNCH SLICES SOLD IN BAKESHOPS OATMEAL BUTTER CRUST BLUEBERRY BARS FRESH BUCO PIE CLASSIC EGG PIE BANANA CREAM PIE P1,200.

AUG 21, 28 & SEP 4 - 3 SATs - 9:00AM - 5:00PM - FONDANT ICING & GUMPASTE FLOWERS COURSE. P2,500 - INCLUDES INGREDIENTS LUNCH & SNACKS LESSON 1 DAISY TULIP SAMPAGUITA APPLE BLOSSOM & SWEET PEA MAKE DIFFERENT KINDS OF LEAVES STAMENS CALYX FOR FUTURE USE LESSON 2 CAKE (STYRO) COVERED W/ FONDANT ICING & "CUT-GLASS" TECHNIQUE MAKE GUMAMELA LILIES STEMPHANOTIS CHRYSANTHEMUM CARNATION DAFFODIL WILTON ROSE VICTORIA ROSE LESSON 3 ORCHID GUMPASTRE RIBBONS & SWAGS PREPARATION & DECORATION OF FONDANT WEDDING CAKE (FOR TAKE HOME) BY LENI R. ARAULLO

AUG 22 SUN 2:00 - 5:30PM - 7 MONEY-MAKING SAUSAGE COURSE 1 - GERMAN (BRATWURST); HUNGARIAN KIELBASA MEXICAN L.A. GREEK SHEBOYGAN BRATS OF WISCONSIN CHORIZO MACAO BAGUIO SAUSAGES BONUS ATCHARA & HOT POTATO SALAD P980. BY LENI R. ARAULLO.

AUG 24, 31 SEP 7 & 14 - 4 TUEs - 9:00AM - 5:00PM MASTER COURSE IN CAKE DECORATING, P3,500. INCLUDES INGREDIENTS LUNCH & SNACKS (EXCEPT DECORATING MATERIALS LIKE PIPING BAGS, TIPS, ETC AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT THE CULINARY STUDIO OR BRING YOUR OWN)
LESSON 1 FLUFFY BUTTER CREAM ICING TECHNIQUES IN COLORING BORDERS SHELL ROPE STAR LEAF ZIGZAG "E" MOTION FLEUR DE LIZ MAKE GARLANDS & SWAGS BASKET-WEAVING LATTICE DESIGN 12 DIFFERENT DESIGNS FOR TOP & SIDES OF CAKE DIRECT PIPING OF CAKE OF ROSE BOUQUET, SWEET PEA CARNATION
LESSON 2 5 KINDS OF ICING INCLUDING MARSHMALLOW, ROYAL TO MAKE SUGAR FLOWERS ON NAILS TOOTHPICKS FLORAL WIRE LEARN SUGAR MOLDING CAKES FAN BOOTIES BASKET CRIB HEART, MARY'S HEAD, THE LION KING DVD MUSICAL DESIGN CAKE, TWO ADULT "SEXY" CAKES. EACH STUDENT MUST BRING TRAY/BOX TO TAKE HOME CAKES
LESSON 3 MARZIPAN (FREE HAND) MOLDING & PAINTING OF FRUITS FIGURES & VEGETABLES LEARN THE MARZIPAN ROSE FIGURE & FRUIT PIPING DECORATE DIFFERENT DESIGNS ON MUFFINS FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVINGS, WHICH HOTELS & LUXURY LINERS SERVE.
LESSON 4 HOW TO PREPARE DEBUTANTE / WEDDING CAKES TIERED, STACKED, ETC EACH STUDENT WILL DESIGN & DECORATE A WEDDING CAKE (STYRO) TO BRING HOME PLEASE BRING TRAY/BOX BY LENI R. ARAULLO.

AUG 26 THU OR SEP 2 THU SEP 23 THU
1:00 TO 5:00PM. LIVING WELL
3RD FLOOR, THE PODIUM,
ADB AVENUE, MANDALUYONG
PLS. CALL MS. AIMEE TO RESERVE
687-4308; 845-1700.
LEARN HOW TO MAKE OUR
DELICIOUS BUTTERCAKE;
MAKE BOILED ICING TO DECORATE
ON WILTON'S CHARACTER PANS
USING A STAR TIP; A ROUND TIP;
3 PIPING BAGS; ONE COUPLER.
AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT ABOVE STORES
OR BRING YOUR OWN.
P750. INCLUDING INGREDIENTS.
FULL PARTICIPATION.
FOR BEGINNERS, 14 YRS. OLD & ABOVE;
HOBBYISTS; OFW'S.
IDEAL FOR HOME BUSINESS.
BY LENI R. ARAULLO.

AUG 25 & SEP 1 - 2 WEDs - 2:30 - 5:30PM - MAKE MONEY BY LEARNING 15 DELICIOUS RECIPES IN TWO LESSONS. P1,700, INCLUDES INGREDIENTS A SPECIAL FRUIT CAKE 3 VERSIONS OF BROWNIES (DOUBLE CHOCOLATE FUDGE CHOCO-CARAMEL FUDGE WALNUT-TOPPED DARK & LIGHT BARS) 5 DIFFERENT KINDS OF WELL-KNOWN MUFFINS 5 DIFFERENT KINDS OF CHOCOLATE-CHIP COOKIES MACADAMIA NUT COOKIES FOR TEENAGERS & ABOVE

AUG 27 FRI 2:30 - 5:30PM - OPEN A PIZZA PARLOR: LEARN TO MAKE THESE ITALIAN FAVORITES MOZARELLA-TOPPED BIG & THICK CRUST PIZZA (BAKED IN A RECTANGULAR PAN) THIN CRUST PIZZA W/ DIFFERENT TOPPINGS FETTUCINE ALFREDO SPAGHETTI CARBONARA, BREADED VEAL STEAKS W/ LEMON PEACH-FILLED CREPES W/ FRUIT SAUCE PLUS 17 BONUS RECIPES OF PASTAS & SANDWICHES P980.

AUG 29 SUN 2:00 - 5:30PM - 8 MONEY MAKING SAUSAGE COURSE 2, P980. CHINESE SWEET SAUSAGE (LOP CHONG ALSO USED FOR SIOPAO FILLING) PHIL ANISADO LONGANIZA JAPANESE CHICKEN SHIITAKE (MUSHROOM) SAUSAGE PERUVIAN HOT LINKS, CHEROKEE INDIAN SAUSAGE SMOKED BRATWURST BY LENI R. ARAULLO WHO TAUGHT & SOLD HAM & SAUSAGES TO HOTELS & RESTAURANTS SINCE 1963.

SEP 2 THU 1:00 - 5:00PM - BAKING/CAKE DECORATING ON WILTON CHARACTER CAKES AT LIVING WELL STORE 3RD FLOOR THE PODIUM ADB AVE MANDALUYONG P750 PLEASE SEE AUGUST 26 TO RESERVE/OTHER DETAILS

SEP 3 FRI 2:30 - 6:15PM - LEARN THE SOFTEST SIOPAO DOUGH EVER! THE MOST DELICIOUS SIOMAI KUA PAO (PEKING SIOPAO W/ MEAT FILLING & PICKLED MUSTASA) FISH HEAD SOUP CAMARON RELLENADO QUEKIAM W/ RADISH SALAD STEAMED LAPU-LAPU P980.

SEP 5 SUN 2:00 - 5:30PM - MONEY MAKING SAUSAGES COURSE 3, P980. LEARN 7 OF YOUR FAVORITES FOOTLONG HOTDOGS BEEF SAUSAGE JERKY USING "VIPPI" CASING USED FOR HOTDOG-MAKING, WHOLE CORNED BEEF SERVED IN FIVE-STAR HOTELS & RESTAURANTS PORK HAMONADO& BEEF DE RECADO THE BEST PAMPANGO PORK TOCINO LONGANIZA LUCBAN P980. BY LENI R. ARAULLLO

SEP 8 WED 2:30 - 6:30PM - EASY BREAD BAKING FOR WOULD BE BAKESHOP OWNERS - LEARN & EARN NOW AMERICAN TASTY BREAD MORELLA & ERNEST BIG PANDESAL HONEY BREAD BUTTER BREAD CHEESE BREAD SUPERSOFT CARMELITE BREAD IN A BUNDT PAN P980. A MUST FOR BREAD LOVERS!

SEP 9 THU 2:30 - 5:30PM - MONEY MAKING FASTFOOD RECIPES - S&R STYLE HERB ROASTED MAGNOLIA CHICKEN; YUMMY CHICKEN INASAL CHICKEN BURGERS BAKED POTATO CHIP MAGNOLIA CHICKEN BREASTS W/ PESTO LINGUINNE P980.

SEP 10 FRI 2:30 - 5:30PM MONEY MAKING CHINESE FASTFOOD RECIPES - WONTON NOODLE SOUP DELICIOUS MAKI SOUP STIR FRIED LOMI KUCHAY DUMPLINGS W/ EASY TO MAKE HOMEMADE WRAPPER PORK CURRY RICE AUTHENTIC CHINESE STYLE SHRIMP FRIED RICE P980.

SEP 11 SAT 2:30 - 5:30PM - EASY HONGKONG RESTAURANT COURSE: SIZZLING CHINESE STYLE STEAKS WITH MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN SHRIMP & CRAB CLAWS & BALLS IN NEST WITH SWEET & SOUR SAUCE, HONGKONG STYLE ASSORTED VEGETABLE PLATTER, MAGNOLIA STIR FRIED CHICKEN BREAST WITH CASUY, LAPULAPU FILLET IN CREAM OF CORN SAUCE, LOURDES FAT CRABS COOKED IN GINGER - GARLIC SPRITE P980.

SEPT. 12 - SUN - 2:00 - 5:30 PM - NEW MONEY MAKING BACON & SAUSAGE 4. AMERICAN BACON, CANADIAN BACON CHORIZO DE BILBAO GERMAN WHITE FISH SAUSAGE LONGANIZA ILONGA INCLUDES ACTUAL SMOKING METHOD BONUS MORCILLAS (SPANISH BLOOD SAUSAGE) BY LENI R. ARAULLO. P980

ATTENTION! BAGUIO RESIDENTS

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VALEDICTORIAN I.H.M.E.S. INTERNATIONAL HOTEL SCHOOL, UNITED KINGDOM -1992
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PLEASE SEE BAGUIO MIDLAND COURIER SUNDAYS FOR BAGUIO SCHEDULE
RESTAURANT OPENS 6:00 PM TO MIDNIGHT (EXCEPT SUNDAYS)

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Hunt's the Tomato Expert TOMATO SAUCE
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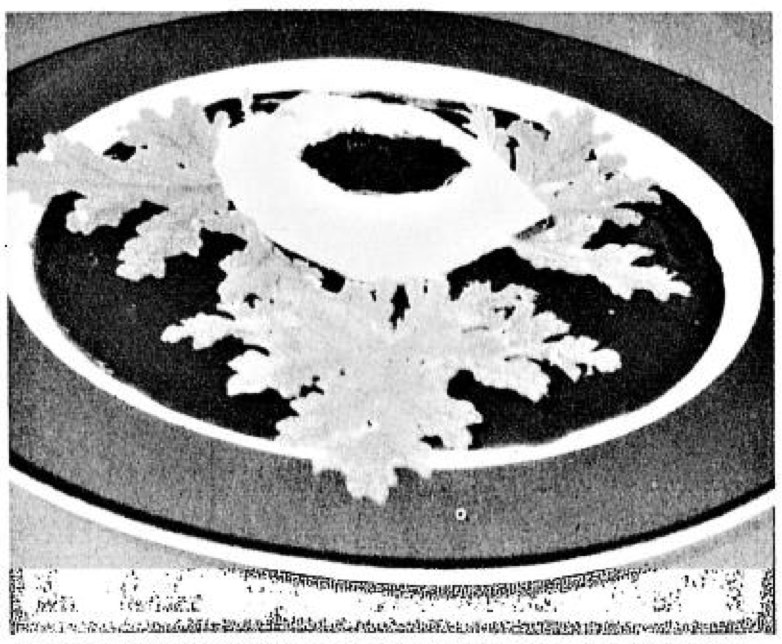
Hunt's the Tomato Expert PORK & BEANS
Hunt's the Tomato Expert TOMATO PASTE
MONTEREY QUALITY MEATS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MEDIA AGUA (media refers to print and broadcast) was concocted by Chef Clemeña to help former colleagues get over a hangover.

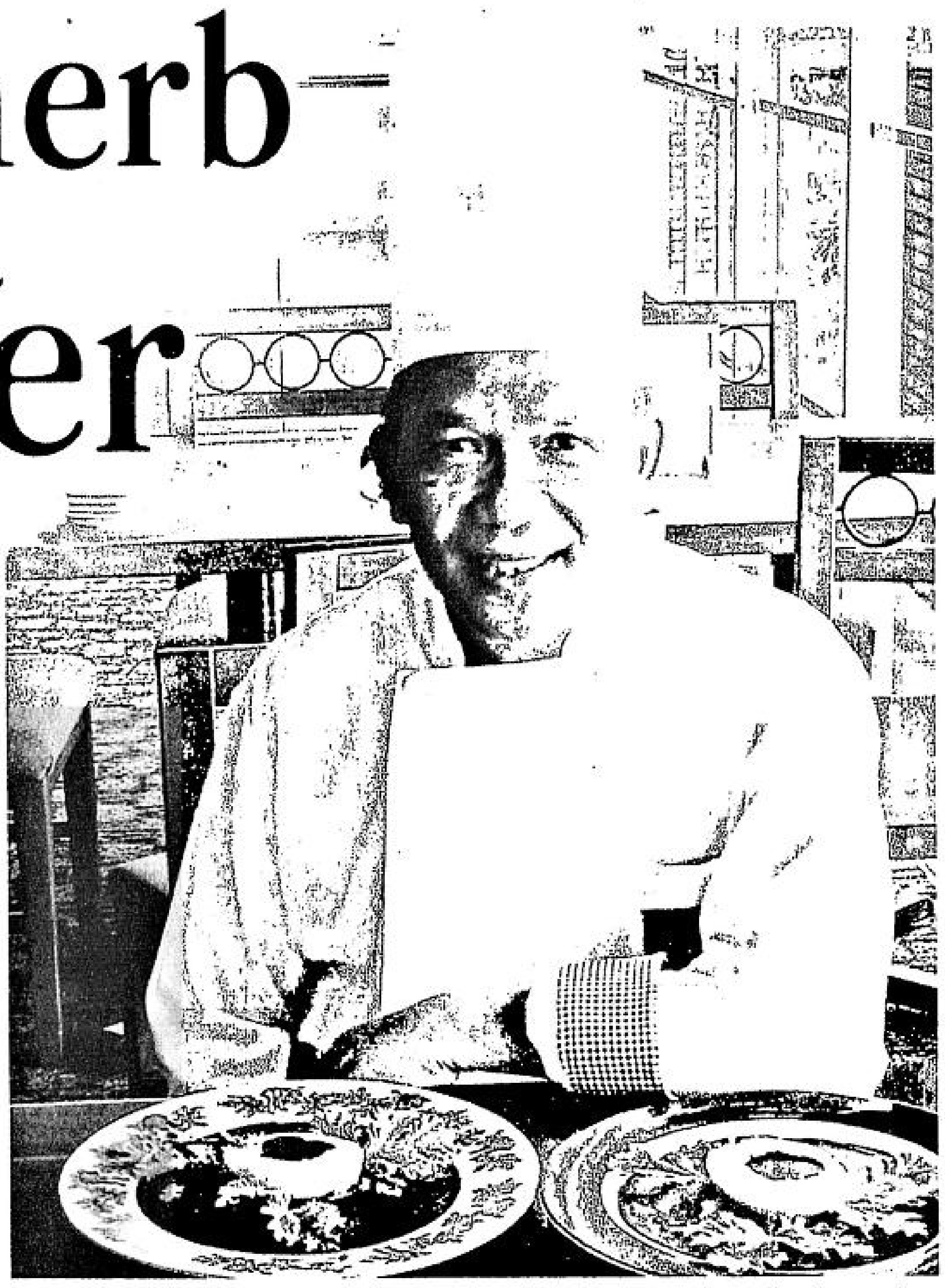


PEAR BURST on Tsokolate-eh Sauce and Malvarosa Leaf. Tsokolate-eh, which is pure chocolate, is healthier because it does not contain the additives of processed chocolate, says Clemeña.

BACKYARD greens in balsamic. The lowly but medicinal *pancit-pancitan*, a ubiquitous type of grass in gardens and flower pots, gets a cordon bleu treatment.

On an herb and a prayer

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Roger Carpio



ROBERTO Clemeña took a circuitous route to cooking. He was first a journalist, then a priest and an herb gardener.

ROBERTO Clemeña, Bitoy to former media colleagues and Bert to others, will not only serve you food that is good for your physical health but will also throw in a prayer or two for your spiritual well-being.

The 60-something Clemeña is currently on his fourth or fifth career change and it is a convergence of everything that he has done and has ever been. As a young boy growing up in Albay, Clemeña's only dream was to become a journalist. The fifth of eight children, he was turned on to reading by a father who paid for medical studies in Japan by working in the Asahi Shimbun.

The older Clemeña also taught his son to love and respect nature by making the boy plant a tree every birthday from age seven. The son now marks every milestone by planting a tree anywhere that is accessible, including road sides.

Journalism or farming

Clemeña, who grew up wanting only to become a journalist or, failing that, a farmer. readily became a Bicol correspondent and later defense reporter of the defunct Philippine Herald.

But after five years, Clemeña, whose faith was also nurtured quite early in life, left journalism, studied to be a priest and worked as a missionary for the Society of the Divine Word in Papua New Guinea. On his return he became a military chaplain. He obtained dispensation to leave the priesthood a few years later, married the former Rose Salazar (now executive vice president of the College of St. Benilde), and became an herb gardener.

"From soul to soil" is how he describes the transition, although he adds, "I really felt closer to God with farming… I saw God's miracle every day."

So he treats his plants with the respect he thinks any of God's creatures deserves. "*Nagpapaalam ako sa* herbs *bago ko putulin*." Ever the missionary, Clemeña is again spreading the good word, this time about herbs, of which many Filipinos know little.

It was a short step between his deep interest in herbs and formal cooking lessons. He took up Culinary Arts at St. Benilde and did advance studies in Ecole le Cordon Bleu in Paris.

A former journalist and priest brings everything in his past to bear on his latest transformation—cordon bleu caterer

Now, as a cordon bleu chef, his Chefs at Your Service and Chef Robert's Table (tel. 8511125 and 0916-5574576) cater only for intimate, especially family, get-togethers (from two to no more than 25 people). And he is bringing everything he has been in the past—his passion and his vocation—to bear on his new calling.

Annotated menus

The journalist in him finds expression in "annotating" his menus. He explains what benefits diners will get from the herbs he is using and even gives a little background on the dishes he is cooking.

And although he can no longer say Mass, his prayer before a meal, should clients ask him to say grace, is definitely more meaningful than the short thanksgiving poem generations of children have been taught to say. Needless to say, the after-dinner prayer is just as profound.

His deep-abiding faith makes Clemeña favor family gatherings over big social events. He wants to encourage family togetherness through shared meals, hoping that "the family that eats together, stays together."

God's instrument

He says, "By cooking I become an instrument of God in helping bring families together." He notes that feeding people is one of the recurring images in the Bible, particularly in the chronicles of Christ's life.

Herbs, of course, are the mainstay of any Clemeña menu. The president of the Herb Society of the Philippines is a strong believer in the medicinal and therapeutic powers of herbs. He also likes showcasing indigenous materials.

Recently, Clemeña borrowed the kitchen at the roofdeck of the College of St. Benilde Hotel on Estrada cor. Arellano Streets in Malate to prepare four of his herbed specialties for the INQUIRER.

His "Media Agua" (Coconut Juice Hot Soup) was specially concocted as a cure for a usual affliction of media colleagues: bad hangover. So, loosely translated, it means "water for the media" and does not refer to the rainspout. It consists of very young coconut juice and meat, native guavas and *kamote* tops. The salad, "Backyard Greens in Balsamic," means just that, as it uses *pako* (an edible fern), and medicinal "weeds" *pancit-pancitan* and *ulasiman bato*, both of which grow abundantly in gardens and even in flower pots. Pancit-pancitan relieves arthritis, lumbago and other joint pains while *ulasiman* has cold relief properties.

The "Skin-less Herbed Chicken," cooked in an old cast-iron pot known as Dutch oven, has no cholesterol because only white meat is used. The herbs tarragon and thyme create a sense of well-being.

For dessert, Clemeña prepared "Pear Burst on Tsokolate-eh Sauce and Malvarosa Leaf." He says tsokolate-eh is healthier than other varieties because it does not have asthma-causing animal fat. Malvarosa, with ampalaya-like leaves and transformed into the geranium in the west, gives a lemony hint to the dessert.

Clemeña willingly shares his recipes with INQUIRER readers.

AS A FINISHING touch, the Skin-less Herbed Chicken is baked using a Dutch oven. The lid is sealed through a process called luting.

The praying chef's recipes

Media Agua

(A hangover cure)

5 c juice from very young coconuts plus the almost clear white flesh, scraped off the shell to make one cup

3 medium-size fully ripened tomatoes, chopped roughly into chunks

3 pcs bangus, heads only

3 tbsp *kalamansi* juice

5 pcs local guavas, preferably with pink meat, quartered

1 large onion, sliced

2 bunches of *kamote* tops, red ones

In stock pan, boil coconut juice with tomatoes, fish heads, guavas, onion for about 20 minutes. Add a portion of the *kamote* tops. Simmer for another 10 minutes to allow the soup to acquire the flavors of all ingredients. Liquid will turn pink. Pass the liquid through a sieve and press ingredients to extract flavors. Discard solids. Strain once more through fine mesh. Bring to simmer again. Add scraped coconut flesh, remaining *kamote* tops and the *kalamansi*. Adjust seasoning. Serve piping hot.

Backyard Greens in Modena's Balsamic

(Perks up your appetite)

Collect *pancit-pancitan*, which grows abundantly especially during the rainy season, according to your taste and requirement.

Bunches of *pako*

5 tbsp Balsamic

1 medium-size red tomato, sliced thinly across

salt and pepper to taste

3 hard-boiled eggs, sliced across

Thoroughly wash greens. Set aside to dry in spinner or colander. Wash *pako* then snip off the curly tops and tender side leaves. Blanch quickly in hot water and shock in ice bath. *Pako* stays green. Dry all together in spinner.

Remove yolks from the sliced pieces of eggs. Set aside. In a glass bowl, place all greens and toss to mix. To serve, prepare a dark-colored (preferably black) salad plate. Using a grater or a fine mesh sieve, grate yolk, letting plate catch powder-like yellow dust. This is the "mimosa" touch. Top with greens. Place sliced tomatoes on the salad greens and garnish with the egg whites. Colors alone liven up the appetite.

The Ultimate Chicken Stew

(Luted the Corsican way)

500 g chicken parts, except wings, with skin removed

3 pcs carrots, sliced uniformly

2 stalks celery, sliced diagonally

Fresh tarragon to be chopped at final stage of cooking to get 3 tbsp

1 tsp dried tarragon

fresh thyme to be chopped at final stage of cooking to get 2 tbsp

1 tsp dried thyme

¾ c all-purpose flour

1/3 c water

¼ c olive oil

2 tsp vegetable oil for the lute

1 c white wine plus ¼ additional white for de-glazing

1 can *champignon* (mushrooms), sliced

10 pcs prunes, pitted

10 pcs shallots, peeled

1 large onion, sliced in chunks

2 tbsp peppercorn

3 tbsp brown sugar

3 cloves garlic

salt

5 sprigs flat leaf Italian parsley

1 bouquet garni

2 sprigs rosemary, roughly chopped

Marinate chicken parts in glass bowl using white wine, chunky onions, garlic, salt, peppercorn and sugar. Cover and chill overnight in fridge.

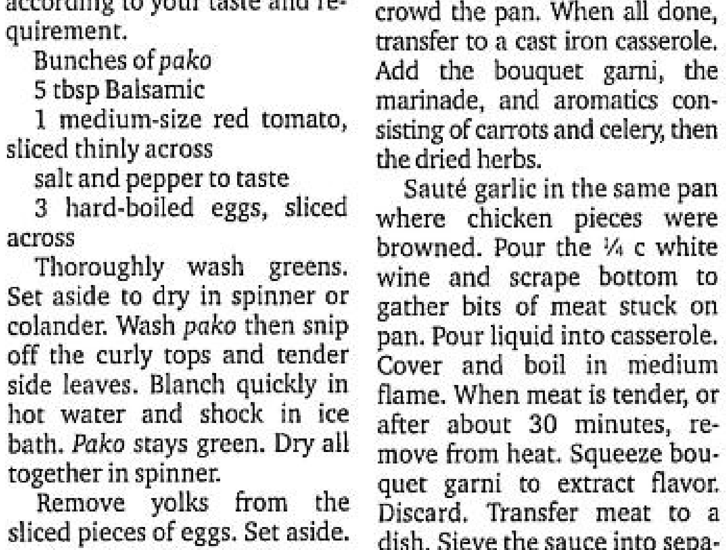
Strain through a colander and reserve liquid. Remove meat pieces and thoroughly dry chicken so there will be no splatter when they are browned. Pour olive oil into pan or a non-stick skillet to brown chicken. Do this in batches so as not to crowd the pan. When all done, transfer to a cast iron casserole. Add the bouquet garni, the marinade, and aromatics consisting of carrots and celery, then the dried herbs.

Sauté garlic in the same pan where chicken pieces were browned. Pour the ¼ c white wine and scrape bottom to gather bits of meat stuck on pan. Pour liquid into casserole. Cover and boil in medium flame. When meat is tender, or after about 30 minutes, remove from heat. Squeeze bouquet garni to extract flavor. Discard. Transfer meat to a dish. Sieve the sauce into separate bowl to cool and for degreasing. Discard also the rest of the solids.

Reassemble stew by returning meat and the degreased sauce to casserole. Add prunes, mushrooms and shallots. Add the chopped fresh herbs. Season to taste before sealing.

To lute (the process of sealing the cooking equipment), mix flour with water to form a light paste. Add the oil to prevent paste from becoming brittle while baking.

Add rosemary for more aroma only. Stick a ribbon of paste around the rim of the lid, press lid into pot to seal pot hermetically and allow flavors to intermingle. Bake in 240°F oven for 30 minutes. Serve with soft rolls or foccacia to mop up sauce from the plate.



CLEMEÑA uses a mix of cordon bleu and indigenous ingredients for his salad—Balsamic from Modena and *pako* and *pancit-pancitan* for his greens. The century-old *almires* is made of stone from Mayon Volcano.

Sky isn't the limit

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

IN OUR column last week, we wrote about the complaint of a credit card holder who availed of a bank's consolidated bill payment service. The bank was supposed to take care of paying Meralco bill, among other utility charges.

The woman cardholder was dismayed to get home one night and find out that the power had been disconnected. She blamed the bank for not paying the Meralco bill because her credit line was used up. She said she was not informed by the bank, nor did she get a disconnection notice from Meralco.

Here is the formal reply from Melinda de Jesus, Citibank vice president for customer service:

"As mentioned by the cardholder in her letter to you, which you subsequently mentioned in your column, her account was over (the) limit at that time. You were correct when you said that cardholders need to keep track of their available credit line when they enroll utility bills to their account to avoid service interruption.

"Generally, if an account is 'overlimit,' this means the credit line has been used up and this prevents us from making additional charges to the card. In such an instance, a letter is sent advising the cardholder of the 'overlimit' and our inability to (pay) any incoming utility bill. We also advise the utility company ... which, in turn, communicates with the cardholder to advise (him/her) to settle the bill immediately.

"We do regret the inconvenience caused to the cardholder and wish to take this opportunity to remind our cardholders to maintain adequate balance in their credit cards to ensure successful posting of enrolled bills.

"We are pleased to inform you though that Citibank 1Bill continues to be warmly received by majority of our customers who appreciate the convenience of remembering only one due date to settle their bills."

Where to send complaints

Richard Lansangan, customer relations manager of Isuzu Philippines Corporation, shares his company's concern for customers. In his letter, he said any complaint from Isuzu vehicle owners could be addressed properly only if the right information was sent to them. So we advise Isuzu owners to forward any complaint or query to him at e-mail address richard-lansangan@isuzuphil.com.

We give him credit for checking the company's database to find out if any of the vehicle owners who complained through our column owned an Isuzu. We did not mention the names of the car companies, but stated that one of the vehicles was a 2002 cross utility vehicle. (It was an Isuzu model.)

Owner Cesar Celestino of ABS-CBN Foundation complained that because of the weak rubber strips around the vehicle's rear windows, a burglar was able to steal valuables from the car. He asked, "Shouldn't the car company recall our units and correct the mistake?"

Here is Lansangan's reply: "With regard to the... rubber strips, this feature has been improved in subsequent models, in line with the industry's drive to upgrade vehicle features. The law does not consider previous designs (that had been) made obsolete by subsequent improvements as materially defective."

Lansangan stressed more customer-friendly innovations and newer processes did not mean earlier models were defective.

Not so smart IVRS

Interactive Voice Response System, or IVRS (it's also called the Automated Call Distribution System), means a telephone response system without human intervention. Callers are instructed by voice commands on what numbers to press to get connected to the office or person they want to talk to. It is supposedly designed for easy, specific access and convenience.

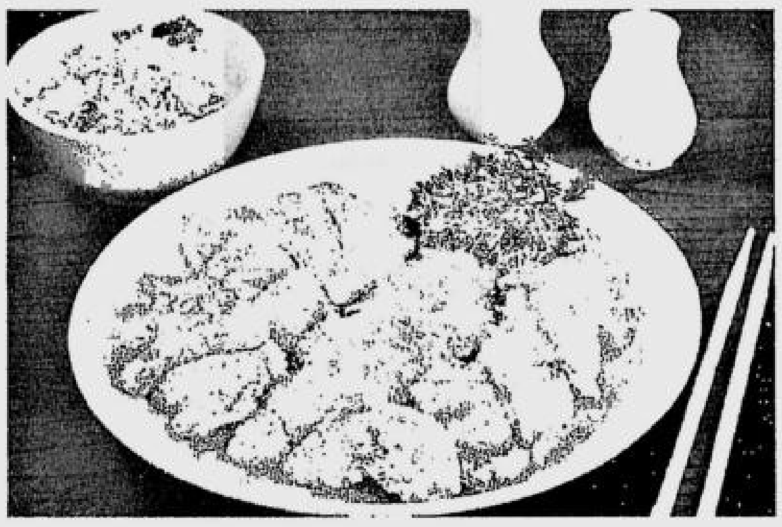
Personally, we find it inconvenient. You go through a labyrinth of commands that can drive you as mad as a rat going through a maze. That was how we felt when we tried to get in touch with our contact at Smart. Give us telephone operators anytime. They conveniently connect you to the person you want to talk to.

So here is a Smart subscriber's concern we couldn't pass on to our contact because of the IVRS system:

J.A. Bautista (genebau_23%edsmail.com.ph@edsamail.com.ph) wants to know how to ask Smart to stop sending unsolicited infotext messages. The letter sender says she has tried texting "stop" and "quit" to no avail. How come, she asks, that Globe provides information on how to unsubscribe (Smart doesn't?)?

Personally, we also wonder why we are, all so suddenly, receiving Smart advisories about the change in cellphone numbers of people we don't know from Adam. Here's an example: "Smart Advisory: This is to inform you that (name of person withheld) has changed cellphone number from 0918-9439876 to 0918-8880336." (Sender Smart).

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph or mariettagiron @hotmail.com



A FAVORITE among Super Bowl of China customers—Lemon Chicken

SEGAFREDO'S Onion Rings

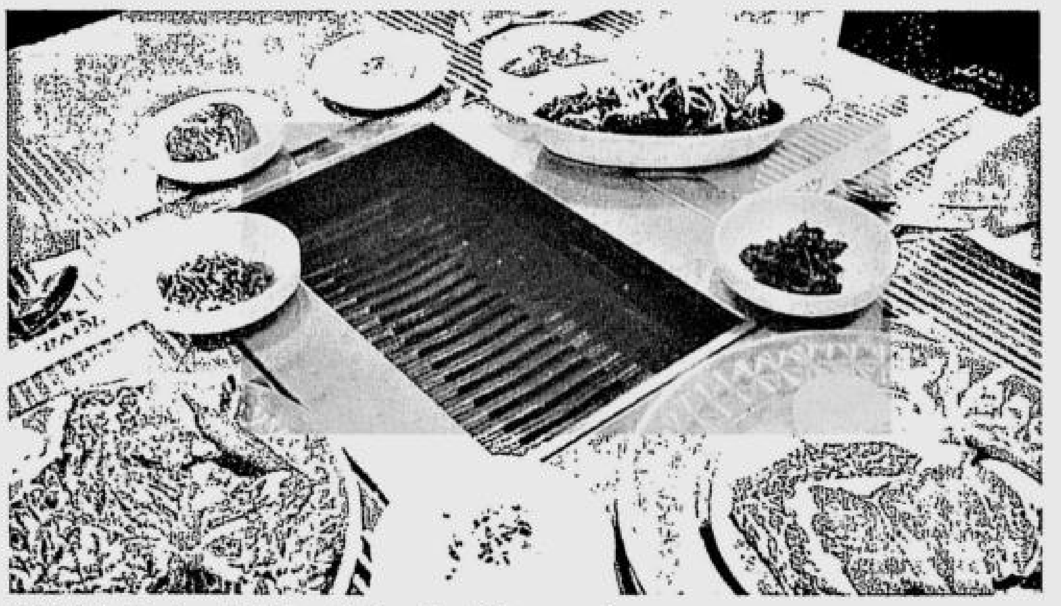
Distinctively Korean

DINING OUT

KAYA offers Korean food like Beef Short Rib Stew, Char-grilled Marinated Short Ribs, Pan-grilled Marinated Beef Strips, Sweet Potato Noodles sautéed with sesame oil and vegetables and Spring Onion and Seafood Pancake. Kaya is located at the G/F of The Podium.

SUPER BOWL of China Restaurant opens Aug. 7 at Eastwood Citywalk in Libis, Quezon City. Guests will be treated to a Chinese dragon dance. Also opening this month is the restaurant's second franchised outlet in SM Fairview. Other Super Bowl of China branches are at Megastrip, Megamall; Jupiter St., Makati; Glorietta 4, Ayala Center; Chefs Avenue, Festival Mall, Alabang; 2/L, SM City North Edsa.

SEGAFREDO Espresso Bar offers beer and bar chow 5-9 p.m., Mondays to Fridays, at its second branch at the ground floor of Liberty Plaza, H. V. de la Costa cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati. Appetizers, at P130 per order, include Squid Bites, Squid Sisig, Beef Flakes, Spiced Sausage and Onion Rings. Thinly-sliced carpaccio of beef, tuna or salmon with wasabi dressing is priced at P150. Call 7574058/8453610/8453546.



KAYA'S tables have built-in grills for a fun dining experience.

EDSA Shangri-La's Summer Palace features Lobster Specials until Aug. 13. Available for lunch and dinner are Cold Lobster Salad, Baked Lobster in Superior Stock, Lobster Congee, Lobster with Dried Shrimps, Sautéed Lobster in garlic, X.O. and dried chili. Call 6338888.

RED CRAB'S Crustasia Crab and Seafood House offers seafood and the best of Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese cooking. Crustasia is at the ground level of Rockwell Power Plant Mall in Makati. Call 7285463.

STEAK Jack offers T-Bone and Tenderloin Steaks, Steak Jack Stew, Steak Jack Omelet and Choco Mud Pie. Steak Jack is at The Greenhills Strip in Greenhills, San Juan.

ORIENT Pearl Seafood Restaurant presents Buttered Chicken, String Beans with Minced Garlic, Crab Meat with Egg and Cream, Tenderloin Beef with Mango, Crystal Prawn Sauté with Salted Egg Sauté, and Diced Honey Pork with Cashew Nuts. Orient Pearl is at 10th Avenue, Caloocan City.

O KITCHEN serves Filipino foods like Grilled Tuna Panga, Dulong in Gabi Leaves, Garlic Crabs, Adobo Flakes Rice, Bagnet and Beefsteak Pinoy. O Kitchen is in the Rod Taylor Compound, Libis, Quezon City. Call 6337958.

THE RICHMONDE Hotel's Richmonde Grill offers desserts like Moist Chocolate Cake, Peach Short Cake, Apple Strudel, Brazo de Mercedes, French pastries and cheesecakes and Filipino favorites such as *puto*, *kutchinta* and *maja mais*. Call 6387777.

Ilocos pies: No ordinary street food

WHY has Ilocos Empanada at 329 Katipunan Ave. quietly and impressively survived the economic crunch and outlived many of its neighbors?

Owner Carol Halili attributes their longevity to their loyal customers and the emphasis she puts on quality since they began.

The *empanada*, filled with pork or chicken *longganisa*, contains very little fat and has shredded green papaya, *mongo* sprouts and one egg which gives it a rich taste. Each *empanada* is cooked to order—just like buying it in Ilocos.

But what probably sets Carol's *empanada* apart from the original is the introduction of technology in its preparation.

"Our product may be branded as street food but our method of preparation is very different, with exact measurements and hygienic handling of the food," she stressed.

Reasonably priced at P35/P30 for the large *empanada* and P22/P17 for the mini *empanada*, the Ilocos Empanada is a complete meal in itself. Authentic *sukang* Iloko is used to season it while eating, making the experience quite unique.

For Makati residents, Ilocos Empanada Corner recently opened at 1762 N. Garcia cor. Asuncion. Call 8962415.

Ready-to-cook frozen *empanadas* are available to take home, as well as other Ilocos products like the *sukang* Iloko, *bagnet*, boneless bangus, *bagoong* and the *chicha-corn*, which comes in a variety of flavors.

ILOCOS Empanada owner Carol Halili shows off the large Ilocos Empanada.

Seminars for aspiring cooks and caterers

TURN your culinary skills into profit with "Cooking Up A Catering Biz", a free cooking seminar with Makati Skyline owner Erlinda Sunico.

With 25 years of successful catering experience, Sunico shares catering recipes and trade secrets on how to effectively start and manage a catering business.

The seminar is on Aug. 28, 1-4:30 p.m., at the San Miguel Head Office Cafeteria, 40 San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong (across SM Megamall).

For those who simply want to learn how to cook, check out "Can't Cook? Want to Cook!," a four-day adult hands-on cooking workshop for beginners held on all Saturdays of September (Sept. 4, 11, 18 and 25), 8 a.m.-1 p.m., at the San Miguel PureFoods Culinary Center, Legaspi corner Eagle Sts., Barrio Ugong, Pasig City.

Registration fee of P2,500 covers meals, ingredients and materials. Call 6719876 local 2771, 402, 404 and 405.

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Email cafeysabel@mydestiny.net

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER SCHEDULE
RECREATIONAL AND ONE-DAY BUSINESS CLASS

COOKING CLASSES

August 02, Tues. - SIMPLE SUSHI & SASHIMI WORKSHOP 1. This Sushi and Sashimi Workshop of Chef Aoki from Osaka Japan where the student will learn simple and basic sushi and sashimi making that you can do and serve to your family and friends. Trimming of Tuna, Sushi Rice, California Maki, Tekka Maki, Tamaki, Kanikyun Sarada and Miso Soup are the recipes that he will be teaching. P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 03, Wed. - SIMPLE SUSHI & SASHIMI WORKSHOP 2. You will learn from Chef Rikichi Aoki of Osaka Japan How to Trim Flat Fish, How to make Aji Sushi, Futomaki Rainbow, Maki Inari Sushi, See Chicken Maki, Tamago Yaki and Nigiri Sushi. Recipes include ingredients for P1,000.00 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 05, Thurs. - THAI FAVORITES 5. New set of Thai recipes from Chef Chanya Thaikapt will be demonstrated in this one-day class. The recipes are Pomelo Salad, Shrimp Sate with Peanut Sauce and Cucumber Salad, Squid with Garlic Pepper, Green Curry Fried Rice, Sticky Rice with Mango and Thai Iced Tea. For 1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS

August 07, Sat. - THAI BARBECUE 1. Different kinds of genuine Thai Barbecue with sauces and side dish from Chef Chanya like Chicken Barbecue, Grilled Catfish, Grilled Pork Belly, Grilled Pork Spareribs with Different Kinds of Sauces and Papaya Salad for P1,200.00 including all the ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 08, Sun. - EASY TO DO APPETIZERS 1. Another set of easy to do appetizers from Chef Gene. The recipes are Baked Clams Casino, Ceviche, Sambal Squid, Nilasing na Hipon, Fresh Garlic Mushroom, Korean Octopus, Crispy Beef Ribs in Spiced Salt, Softened Pork Ears for P1,000.00 including ingredients with certificate from 9:00 - 12:00 noon.

August 09, Mon. - A TASTE OF KOREA. Let Shim Kun Huh teach us recipes from her hometown, Pusan Korea. The recipes are Wakame Soup, Dried Anchovy Banchan, Korean Omelet, Kimchi and Bulgogi with Dipping Sauce for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 10, Tues. - EVERYBODY LOVES CHICKEN 1. Chicken dishes from Chef Junjun for the whole family to enjoy. Chicken Penne, Dutch Oven Roast Chicken, Spanish Chicken Stew, Chicken Teriyaki, Oven BBQ Chicken and Pollo Parmigiana for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 11, Wed. - A TASTE OF KOREA 2. Sequel to Shim Kun Huh Korean dishes that you will surely enjoy and its easy to cook. The recipes are Potato Banchan, Seafood Soup, Wakame Salad, Kimchi Fried Rice and Chapche for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 13, Fri. - THE SAUSAGE WORKSHOP 1. Recipes from Chef David for you to learn that can be use in business or as gifts. The recipes are Italian Sausage, Morcillas or Blood Sausage, Longganisang Calumpit, Breakfast Pork Sausage, Seafood Sausage, Sulipan Sausage and Chorizo de Jabali. Recipes include all ingredients for P1,000.00 from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 14, Sat. - SAUSAGE WORKSHOP 2. Chef David teaches his favorite exotic sausages like Fresh Pork Sausage with Apple and Dried Onion, Italian Sausage with 3 Cheeses and Red Wine, Duck Sausage with Fresh Sage and Roasted Garlic, Greek Sausage Loukanika, Tuscan Sausage, Nurnberg Sausage and Sweet Italian Sausage. The workshop includes recipes plus ingredients for P1,000.00 from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 15, Sun. - EASY THAI HOME COOKING. Easy to prepare original Thai home cooking recipes like Pirk King Tua (Spiced Pork with Yard Beans), Phak Bung Kapi (Water Spinach in Shrimp Paste), Khao Pad Sapparot (Fried Rice with Pineapple), Larba, Pat Kaprow Nua (Beef with Holy Basil) and Khanom Saku Thaeng Tai (Melon and Sago with Coco Milk) from Chef Gene Gonzalez for you to learn. Recipes include all ingredients from 9:00 - 12:00 noon for P1,000.00 including all ingredients.

August 16, Mon. - PANINI WORKSHOP. The class for all café and restaurant owners, housewives and hobbyist. Hot, thin and textured Italian sandwiches everyone will enjoy. The workshop is hands-on and the students will be making - panino spreads, different fillings and more extras... Sandwiches like Tuna Cheese, Herbed Chicken, Ham Cheese and lot more... sidings like Potato Chip Salad, Herbed Vegetable and more from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m.
for P1,800.00 including all ingredients. NEW CLASS

August 17, Tues. - A TASTE OF VIETNAM 1. Learn delicious Vietnamese Cuisine from Nga Nguyen de Lemos, owner of Vietnamese Food-House. Recipes include Pho Bo (Beef Noodle Soup), Goi Cuon (Fresh Springrolls with Shrimp and Pork), Pho Ap Chao (Fried Rice Stick noodles with Squid and Shrimps), Cha Ca Thang Long (Grilled Fish with Dill), Goi Rau Muong Tht Bo (Swamp Cabbage with Sauteed Beef Salad) and Che Bap (Sweet Corn with Coconut Milk) for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 19, Thurs. - SUMPTUOUS SALMON 1. Let Chef Gino teach you 6 unique and tasty ways to cook Salmon that can be used in catering or for entertaining. Recipes include Salmon Carpaccio, Salmon Croquettes with Dill-Mustard Sauce, Herb Crusted Salmon Fillet with Caper Buerre Blanc, Spinach Salmon Lasagna with Saffron Gratin, Salmon Mousse with Fish Roe in Horseradish Sauce and Poached Salmon Paupiette with Lemon-Basil Whisk Butter Sauce for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 20, Fri. - DAVE'S SUNDAY CURRIES. Assorted curries with all the fixins for a grand meal from Chef David Fajardo will be demonstrated. The recipes are Chicken Curry, Lamb Curry, Fruit Curry, Fish Curry, Pork and Potato Curry. The recipes include all ingredients from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. for P1,200.00

August 22, Sun. - EASY TO DO APPETIZERS 2. Another set of easy recipes from Chef Gene Gonzalez like Stuffed Mushroom, Modern Sisig, Fried Chilies and Cheese, Spicy Shrimp Pandan, Camaron Dorado con Jamon, Chicken and Black Mushroom Spring rolls and Tuna Tartar. For P1,000.00 from 9:00 - 12:00 noon including ingredients.

August 23, Mon. - PRAWNS TO PLEASE. Chef Gene will teach us different styles of cooking prawns that you will enjoy. Recipes include Prawns Furai, Prawns Bondiana, Sizzling Crystal Prawns in Chinese Bagoong, Prawns in Orange Sauce, Prawns in Tamarind Sauce (Crustacean Style) and Prawns in Caramelized Walnuts for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 24, Tues. - SUMPTUOUS SALMON 2. Let Chef Gino teach you 6 unique and tasty ways to cooking Salmon that can be used in catering or for simple entertaining. Recipes include Salmon Head Red Curry with Coconut Milk, Salmon Teriyaki with Wasabi Mayonnaise, Salmon Meuniere with Kai Sarada Gratin, Salmon Cheesecake, Coulibiac of Salmon, Smoked Salmon with Shrimp Dumpling for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 25, Wed. - A TASTE OF VIETNAM 2. A sequel to Chef Nga Nguyen de Lemos Vietnam cuisine for you to enjoy. The recipes are Cha Gio Tom (Fried Springroll with Shrimps), Goi Buoi Hai Sang (Pomelo Salad with Jellyfish), Ca Kho To (Caramelized Fish in Hot Pot), Banh Xeo (Vietnamese Omelette), Phoxao Bo (Sauteed Hofan with Beef and Kaffir Leaves) and Cha Dau Xanh (Yellow Beans with Coconut Milk) for P1,200.00 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. including all ingredients.

August 26, Thurs. - CHINESE DIMSUMS 3. Another array of Chinese dimsums from our Chinese Pastry and Cake Decorator Chef Ana will be demonstrated in this one-day class. The recipes are Stuffed Tofu Triangles, Pork and Chicken Rolls, Golden Dumpling, Snowballs, Egg Rolls and Chicken Feet with Black Bean Sauce for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. NEW CLASS

August 28, Sat. - SIMPLE AND EASY FISH DISHES. Simple and easy fish dishes from Chef David such as Assam Curried Pampano, Sizzling Bangus Nuggets, Sisig, Kinilaw na Likod ng Bangus, Fish Meuniere with Hazelnut Butter, Smoked Tilapia Tom Yam, Steamed Apahap Fillet with Chinese Ham and Mushrooms and Fish Tempura from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. for P1,200.00 including all ingredients.

August 29, Sun. - SEAFOOD FUSION. Exciting east-west seafood dishes originally created by Chef Gene Gonzalez for special dinners that are memorable to palate and pocket like Lapu-lapu in Spicy Cracker Nut Garlic Sauce, Prawns in Shrimp Essence and Light Curry Sauce with Mango, Shrimps on Toast with Mango Salsa and Roasted Seabass with Five-Spice Butter and Fried Leeks. For P1,000.00 from 9:00 - 12:00 noon. Recipes include all ingredients.

September 01, Wed. - CATERING AND ENTERTAINING SPECIALS. Let Chef Gino teach you recipes that can be used for Catering events and parties. Recipes include Waldorf Salad, Mixed Mushroom Parmesan Pasta, Chicken Croquettes with Honey Mustard Garlic Sauce, Lapu-lapu with Caper Buerre Blanc, Pork Roast Stuffed with Port Wine Gravy and Mango Crepe Surprise for P2,000.00 from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS

September 08, Wed. - CATERING AND ENTERTAINING SPECIALS 2. Once again let Chef Gino teach you more recipes that's good for Catering events and parties. Recipes include Grape, Olive and Anchovy Salad, Beef Lasagna, Seabass Meuniere Braised in Sauce Nantua, Gino's Baby Back Ribs, Potatoes Dauphinoise and Dolce Tostada for P2,000.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS

BAKING CLASSES

August 06, Fri. - BAKING MADE EASY. This class is for all beginners in baking. The recipes are simple, popular and good for business. Chocolate Chip Cookies, Rum Bundt Cake, Banana Loaf, Lemon Bars and Strawberry Shortcake will be demonstrated to you by Chef Junjun De Guzman for P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 18, Wed. - BAKESHOP CAKES. Delicious bakeshop cakes will be demonstrated by Pastry and Cake Decorator Chef Ana Baluyut. The recipes are Mango Cake, Strawberry Cake, Mocca Roll, Blueberry Cake with Streusel and Chocolate for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS

August 21, Sat. - SPECIAL BARS. Learn a new set of delectable bar recipes from Chef Adoree Chong-Uy which are perfect for a home-based business. Recipes include Chocolate Raspberry bars, Date and Apple Squares, Sour Cream Streusel Bars, Sesame Squares, Almond Bars and Lemon Squares for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 27, Fri. - ASSORTED BARS. Pastry and Cake-Decorator Chef Ana Baluyut will be demonstrating different kinds of bars such as Carrot Cake Bars with Cream Cheese, Pineapple Blueberry Bars, Rocky Road Fudge Bars, Strawberry Meringue Bars, Food For The Gods and Banana Squares. Recipes include all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. for P1,200.00. NEW CLASS

August 30, Mon. - MOUTH WATERING BAKED GOODIES. Dennis Hipolito, well known TV - Pastry chef and bakeshop consultant joins CACS with his first lifestyle baking class. He will be making for you the following delectable baked items: Prune Cake with Marinated Prune Frosting, Apple Pecan Monkey Bread, Double Chocolate Banana Loaf, Raspberry &Cream Bites and Crunchy orange Drop Cookies for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS

August 31, Tues. - LOW-SUGAR CALLEBAUT CHOCOLATE DELIGHTS. Using Callebaut No-Added Sugar Chocolates, Chef Junjun will teach all of you simple and easy low sugar goodies: Sugar-free Profiteroles, Pots de Creme, Sugar-free Truffles, Milk Chocolate Peanut Butter Cookies, Mocha Cream Pie and White Chocolate Bread Pudding for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS

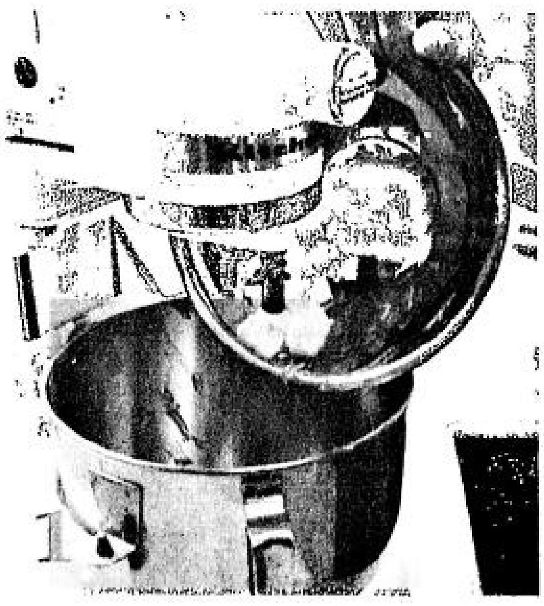
THE PROFESSIONAL CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM

The Professional Culinary Arts Program prepares students for professional entry into the food service industry. This intensive program integrates classical and modern culinary techniques with kitchen management skills. Students learn how to prepare soups, sauces, vegetables, entrees, breads, pastries and desserts. They will learn how to identify, fabricate and portion meat, poultry, fish and shellfish. The course will also provide the introductory skills on Asian cooking, wine appreciation and table service.
The program is a hands-on training series for students to gain proficiency in various skills needed to perform at professional standards in a commercial kitchen. The students will also prepare a Legacy buffet. The program has Internship or In-house Practicum for 200 hours and Externship or Outside Practicum for 200 hours. Enrollment includes 3 sets of uniforms, chef's kit, manual and all the ingredients to be used.
Classes will start on August 24. Enrollment is ongoing. For inquiries and reservations, call 726-9326 or 725-5089 and look for Marilyn or Glady

Do the French quiche

A heavenly mixture of eggs, cream and bacon cooked in a pie shell can be a meal all by itself

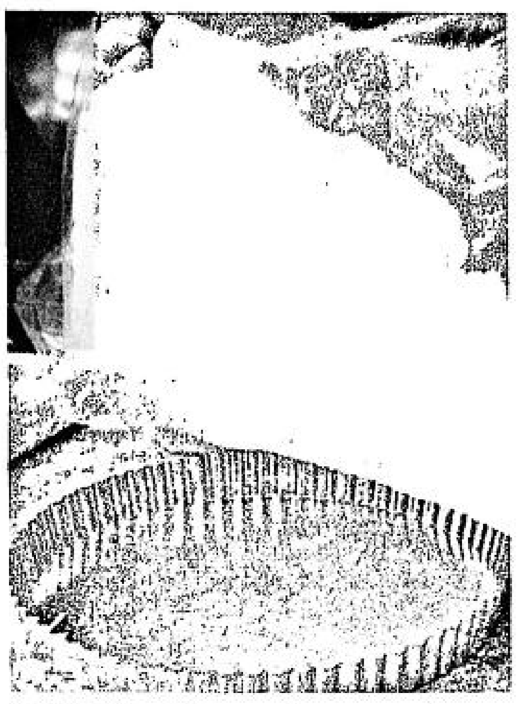
STEP BY STEP



PREHEAT oven to 190°C. Using the paddle of an electric mixer, combine cold butter with the dry ingredients at low speed until mixture appears dry and powdery but not pasty. Drizzle cold water and continue mixing for half a minute.

REMOVE from mixer. Knead until the consistency is neither too hard nor too soft. Roll it into a ball. Wrap dough ball in plastic. Let it rest in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.

BETWEEN two sheets of plastic, roll out the dough into about 1/8-inch thickness, and enough to fit into a 10-inch-round tart pan.



TRANSFER rolled pastry into a two-piece tart pan. Press pastry against the greased bottom and sides of the pan. Make sure to cover the rim.

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Romy Homillada

BAKE blind" is a term for baking a pastry shell before it is filled. When the pastry is cooked, you add the filling and bake the whole thing again.

This technique keeps the pastry shell from going soggy and gives it a light, crisp texture.

It is also often used in preparing the classic French dish, Quiche Lorraine.

Basically, Quiche Lorraine is a heavenly mixture of eggs, cream and bacon cooked in a pie shell.

"Quiche pastry shells are partially prebaked because the time required to bake the filling is not long enough to fully cook the crust," says The French Baker's Johnlu Koa who perfected the art of cooking quiche in two years of studies in various baking schools abroad.

Quiche Lorraine originated in northeastern France, in the region of Alsace-Lorraine.

A savory tart worth doing at home, it can be a complete and satisfying meal. With its light custard base and sprinkling of thick-cut bacon, this spectacular quiche (pronounced *keesh*) is easy to prepare.

In its puffed, buttery crust, it makes an elegant dish when paired with green salad and a glass of wine. It can be served as a lunch or dinner entrée, or as a first course or hors d'oeuvre.

According to Koa, you can also put your imagination to work when making quiche. For filling, you can add almost anything you like to the eggs and cream, such as vegetables, meat or fish. This part of the quiche is easy to prepare. It is the pastry shell that takes more time.

If you're pressed for time, or if you really don't want to make your own, you can buy ready-made crust or a puff pastry from the grocery.

The French Baker, which celebrates its 15th year, has 30 branches nationwide.

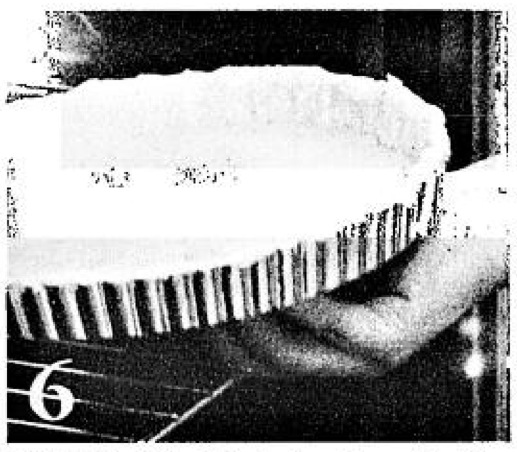
Páte Brisée (French flaky pastry)

2 ½ c all-purpose flour
1 tbsp refined sugar
1 tsp salt
1 bar cold Magnolia Gold Butter, cut into cubes
1/3 c cold water

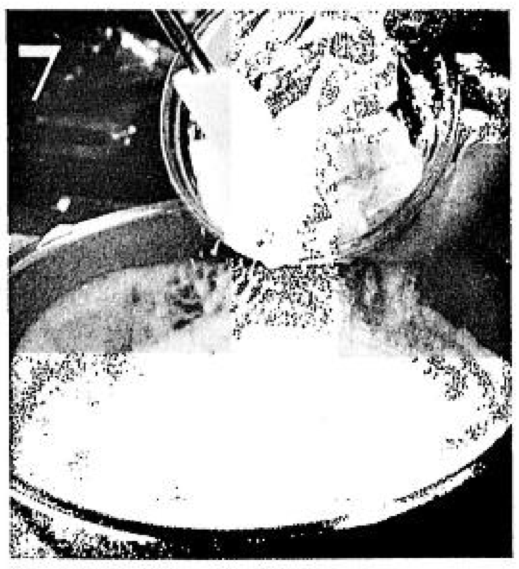
Filling:
½ pack bacon
3 pcs eggs
1 c all-purpose cream
½ c milk
¼ tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp salt
a pinch of nutmeg

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

TRIM off excess pastry. Beat one piece of egg with a pinch of salt to serve as an "egg wash." Brush egg wash all over the pastry.



BAKE "blind" for 10 minutes. Then, take the crust out of the oven to cool down. Set aside.

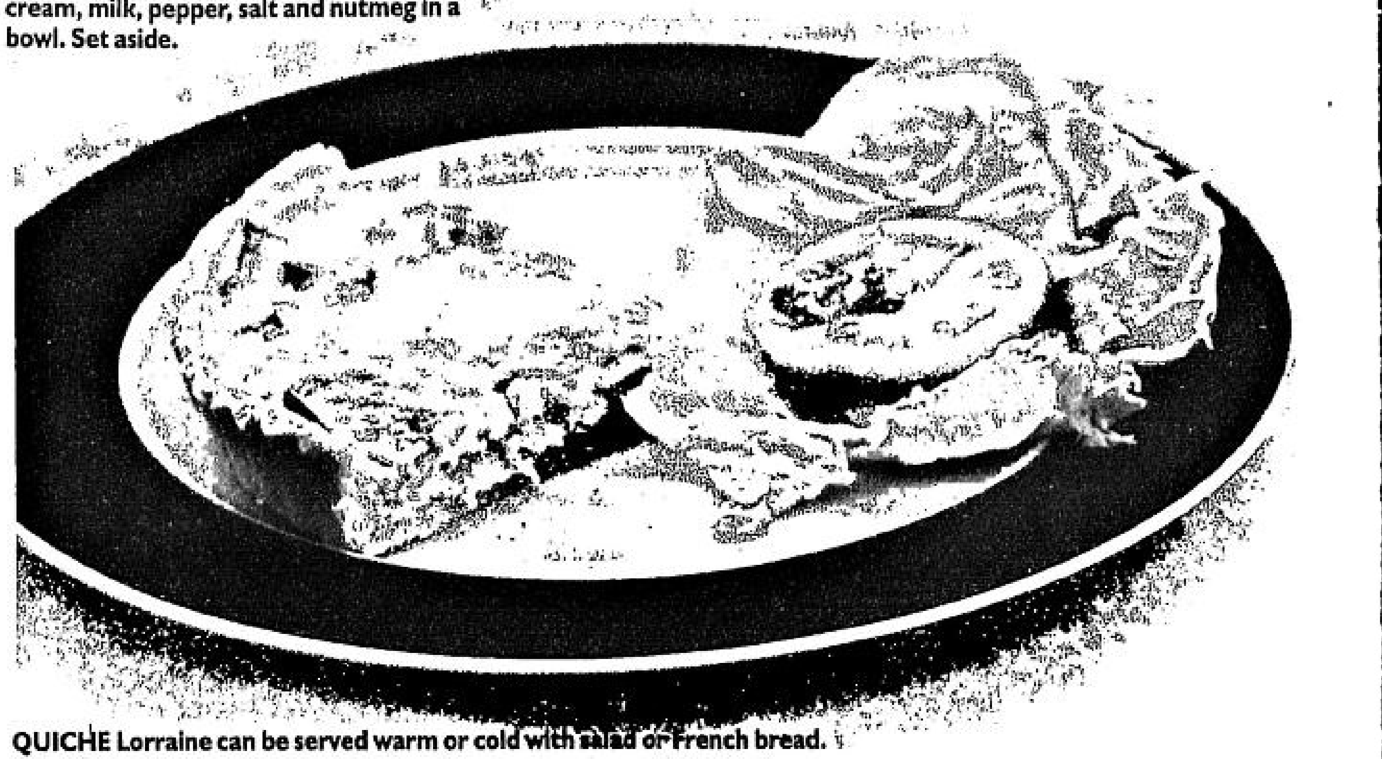


TO make the filling: Whisk together eggs, cream, milk, pepper, salt and nutmeg in a bowl. Set aside.

COOK bacon, making sure it does not turn crispy. Cut into one-inch pieces. Arrange bacon on top of the pre-baked tart shell.

POUR the custard over the bacon up to ¾ of the tart pan.

BAKE at 190°C for 25-35 minutes until the top is golden brown and the custard in the center has set. Remove the bottom pan.



QUICHE Lorraine can be served warm or cold with salad or French bread.

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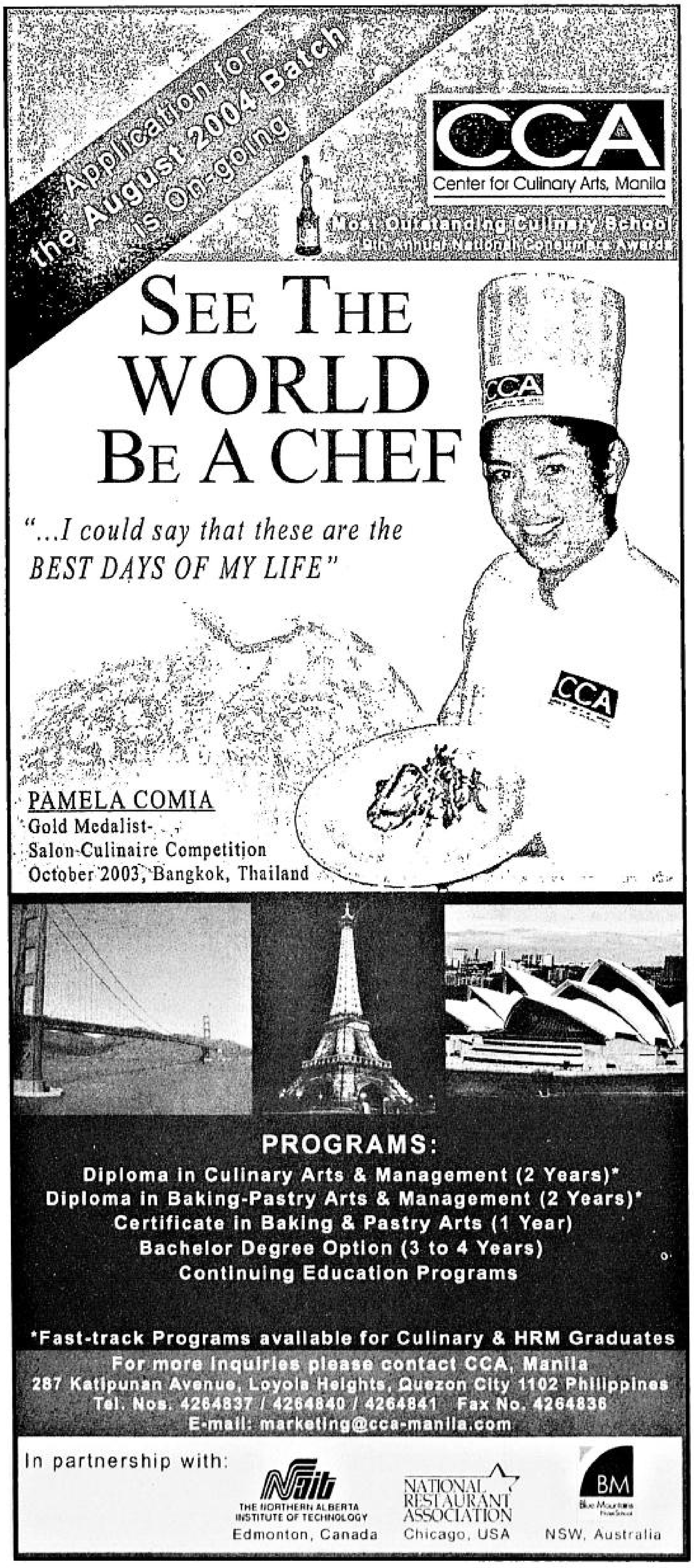
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